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The Coming King

The World's Next Great Crisis

By

WILLIAM EVANS, Ph. D., D.D.

Author of "Epochs in the Life of Christ," "The Book of Genesis," "The Books of the Pentateuch," etc.



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To
my Sincere Friend
SIDNEY T. SMITH,
of Winnipeg, Manitoba,
Canada

One whose life and devotion have been
an encouragement, and who
"loves His appearing"

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Introduction

THAT there is to-day a well-nigh universal feeling that the world is on the eve of a momentous and epoch-making crisis cannot very well be denied. It is a fact patent to every thoughtful observer of the "signs of the times."

Nor is this feeling confined to any one class of people. It is not the ecstatic conclusion of the so-called "religious faddist"; nor is it, as has sometimes been the case—the "Millerites," for example,—a doctrine or teaching monopolized by the overwrought and illiterate religious enthusiast. The deeply religious and thoughtful man; the Biblical scholars of both the premillennial and post-millennial schools; the most Scripturally instructed people of our day—these are the people most deeply conscious of and concerned over the fact that we are in deed and in truth on the eve of a great world-crisis. Not long ago, the president of a theological seminary expressed his opinion that some such crisis was imminent, and in order that he might more carefully study the matter, made inquiry regarding the best books on the subject. The numerous letters that are being received by the best Bible students and teachers, and at the offices of the editors of our religious journals, the world over, bear witness to the deep-seated consciousness that some event of serious moment is about to come upon the world.

Nor are these letters of inquiry from the mere religiously curious. They are from pastors, teachers, and

sound and scholarly Bible students. A prominent preacher stood up in a conference and said that a certain great preacher and evangelist had been assigned to visit the churches in a given section of our country which were in danger of being split to pieces on the rock of the Second Coming of Christ. He said that over 300,000 copies of a certain book on the Second Coming had been sold during that year, and that the Church everywhere, indeed, seemed to be about going wild on this subject. The preacher said, further, that the foreign mission field was most seriously affected with the view that some such great crisis, like that of the Second Coming of Christ, was imminent, and that to remedy this crisis in religious experience, one of the strongest men of the Foreign Mission Board would be sent over there (referring especially to Korea in this case) to stem the tide of such teaching.

Those who are "specialists" in Bible study, who have spent a lifetime in searching out and discussing subjects of this nature, and who are, therefore, specially qualified to speak in the matter with a right to be heard with authority, all express belief that we are on the eve of some momentous crisis.

Further, it is worthy of note that it is not among those of religious thought alone that this feeling exists. People in every walk of life seem deeply conscious that we are on the eve of some great world-crisis—a crisis of such nature as will be characterized by nothing less than the superhuman and supernatural. Our entire commercial system, from the capitalist to the small retail dealer, is shot through with uncertainty and fear for the things that are impending. Among governments there is a general feeling extant that no human power, being, king,

kingdom or democracy can bring about a lasting peace—that no one less than the Prince of Peace Himself can accomplish such a consummation so devoutly wished for by weary, suffering and war-sick humanity.

Here then is a feeling so general and universal, so removed from being the heritage of any one class, and shared so largely by men and women of all classes and conditions, that to ignore it is to lay oneself open to the charge of indifference, ignorance, or imbecility, none of which would be flattering to any man, especially to one claiming to be a thinker or leader of the thought and life of others, and surely not to the Christian and minister of the Gospel. “Ye can discern the face of the sky,” why can ye not “discern the signs of the times?” said Jesus. The voice of universal humanity can hardly be wrong. So universal a consciousness should be listened to with great care. Such a universal consciousness of some great impending event immediately preceded the first coming of Christ. It was in “the fullness of time” that Christ’s first coming took place. The nations were wearied and groaned beneath the weight of Roman oppression; the Greek culture had failed to bring satisfaction to the hearts of men, and the religion of the Hebrews had not given spiritual rest even to the Jews themselves, much less to the nations.

An individual illustration is seen in Simeon (Luke 1) who, while longing to die, had been assured that death should not overtake him until he had seen the Lord’s Christ. So on every hand a spirit of expectancy was manifest—people were looking and waiting for the Consolation of Israel.

Coming events cast their shadows before them. It is not strange, therefore, that there should have been pre-

monitions of Christ's coming. One who lived at the time of the Reformation vividly portrays the unrest and alarm felt in all Europe on the eve of the outbreak of Protestantism; "distress abounded, lawlessness prevailed, unbelief was rampant and the whole world was in travail with some great evil." It proved then to be God's way of speaking to the race regarding Christ's First Coming. Why may not the present consciousness indicate a like purpose regarding the Second Coming of Christ? May this not be "the day of our visitation" and we know it not?

I

THE CRISIS DEFINED

WHAT, most likely, will this impending crisis be? Various answers will be given to this question, each in accordance with the individual or specific viewpoint. To the political economist it will be one thing; to the socialist, politician, and militarist, quite another. Some maintain that it will issue in "the brotherhood of man, and the federation of the world."

Shall we venture the opinion that all such views of the imminent World-Crisis are erroneous and doomed to failure? To the Scripturally-instructed Christian there can be but one answer to the question:—What will be the nature of the coming World-Crisis, that one "divine, far-off event toward which the whole creation moves"? It must be, IT IS THE COMING AGAIN OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST, TO TAKE UPON HIMSELF THE REINS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD: it is the breaking of that day in which "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ." We are living in "the last days"; it is "the last time"; we are approaching the "end of the days"; we are on the eve of the "consummation of the age." It is "the last hour."

The probation of the race is destined to end. God has tried the race first by individuals, such as the patriarchs—Adam and Noah; and it was a sad failure. He then tried the race in and by the choice of a nation,

the Jew—in Abraham—a nation elected to be a channel of blessing to the whole world; that, too, was a dismal failure, as the treacherous and sad history of the Jew abundantly shows. God then put the reins of government into the hands of the nations themselves (the Gentile powers) to see what they could do. Gentile dominion has proven itself an inglorious failure as the last world war and death-grapple between the greatest and most cultured nations of all the Gentile powers so brutally demonstrated. “The times of the Gentiles” may soon end. What is left for God to do? Patriarch, Jew, Gentile—all have failed. There is but one thing now to be done, and that is for the Son of God Himself to come and take the reins of government; for God’s chosen King to reign over the peoples of the earth. Then, and not until then, shall the words of the prophet Isaiah be fulfilled: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more ” (2:2-4). These shall be “the days of the Son of Man,” “the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began ” (Acts 3:21).

This universal unrest, this world-wide, indefinable yearning for something that cannot very well be explicitly expressed is much like that world-wide hunger, that universal and yet indescribable feeling that some great crisis was at hand, that preceded the first coming of our Lord into this world. It was "in the fullness of time" that He came. It was just at the time when the Hebrew with his religion, the Greek with his culture and philosophy, and the Roman with his almost superhuman power of organization—all, had failed to satisfy the needs of the race, and the heart of universal humanity cried out pitifully for something—for the "living God," although it knew it not. Yes, it was "when we were yet without strength," that, "in due time," the Christ came into the world to suffer and die for its sin. So shall it be with regard to His Second Coming into this world to rule and reign.

DANGER OF PREJUDICE

Is there not a very real danger, think you, that the Church of Christ shall make the same mistake with regard to His Second Coming that the Jew made with regard to His First Coming, and in consequence of which that nation has suffered so grievously and so long? There is no more seeming probability of the fulfillment of events said to precede the Second Coming of Christ than of those connected with His First Coming.

Nor should prejudice or bias arising from the crude and grotesque absurdities which many deluded adherents of the teaching have thrown around the "Blessed Hope" make us unwilling to investigate and make earnest inquiry into this glorious doctrine, which, to a greater or less extent, has been the blessed outlook of the believer

in all the ages since "the promise of his coming" was given by the departing Master Himself. There are certain unanswerable reasons why the sincere seeker after truth will not close his eyes or ears to this matter. Counterfeiters there are, and always have been. It is nevertheless incumbent upon us to search for the true and genuine. Errorists there are, and always will be—they are predicted until the time of the end. It is all the more necessary for the believer, therefore, that he give such time and thought as shall enable him to distinguish between the truth and error. Faddists will always be in vogue, but they should not keep us from maintaining sober views of the truth.

II

THE CERTAINTY OF THE CRISIS

THAT Jesus Christ is coming again to this earth to take the reins of government until the kingdom of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, is certain.

Differences of opinion there may be with regard to certain phases and details of the Second Coming of Christ, but there has always been unanimity of belief within the Church during all the Christian centuries with regard to the great fact itself. That Jesus Christ will some day be "King of kings and Lord of lords"—this doctrine the Christian Church has always firmly adhered to.

1. CORROBORATION OF THE FACT.

(a) *This fact is clearly taught in the Scriptures.*

The prominence given by the inspired writers to the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is really surprising. Some have gone so far as to say that more space is given to it than to the doctrine of the atonement, and aver that where salvation by atonement is mentioned once, the Second Advent is referred to twice. Where the first coming of Christ is mentioned once, that of His Second Coming is mentioned eight times. Of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament, all but four of them refer to it. One out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament refers to the Second Coming. Over half a hundred times in the twenty-seven books of the New

Testament are we exhorted to "watch" and "be ready" for such a "blessed hope." Entire chapters, such as Matthew 24 and 25; Luke 21; Mark 13 are devoted to this subject, as are whole books, such as 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Revelation. It is an interesting fact that each chapter of the first epistle to the Thessalonians closes with a reference to the Second Advent (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:14-18; 5:23). In the 216 chapters of the New Testament, it is said there are 318 references to this doctrine.

The doctrine of the Lord's supper is mentioned in only four of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, and, indeed, if you consider the references in the Synoptic Gospels as being equivalent to one mention, then it is referred to in the Gospels once and in only one of Paul's epistles (1 Cor.). Even in this Pauline mention it is interesting to note that the Second Advent is referred to in connection with the Communion: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death—till he come" (1 Cor. 11:27; Matt. 26:29; Mark 11:25; Luke 22:16-18). Baptism is referred to fifteen times in the Pauline epistles, whereas the Second Coming is mentioned fifty times. In all his epistles (save Galatians and Philemon) does Paul make mention of this doctrine.

A question naturally arises in view of these facts: Does the doctrine of the Lord's Second Coming receive the prominence in our preaching, teaching and conversation commensurate with the place given it in the Scriptures of the New Testament?¹ If not, why not? Would

¹ Of course we should remember that this prominence is to the doctrine of the Second Coming in general, and not to any particular view of it such as "pre" or "post."

it not seem fair to assert that a doctrine so prominently set forth in the Scriptures demands that the preaching and teaching of the Second Coming of Christ occupy a larger place in the pulpit, classroom and study? Why should we not insist that first things be put first, and that the things which the Scriptures most emphasize shall be made most prominent by those who occupy the position of exponents of the things written therein? Was it not the insistence of such men as Martin Luther, the hero of the Reformation, that resulted in the bringing into prominence of the glorious doctrine of "Justification by Faith," a doctrine which, while so prominent in the Scriptures, had yet been hidden for so many centuries by the indolence and insincerity of a cold and dead church? If the ministry of the Church is silent on the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, why should not the membership rise and demand that the pulpit give this doctrine the place of prominence accorded it by the sacred writers? If professors in the divinity schools neglect this phase of the Church's Christian consciousness throughout the centuries, why should not the divinity students who are preparing themselves to declare "the whole counsel of God" demand that the "whole" and not a part of the counsel of God be declared unto them? It would not be the first time the pew has spoken back to the pulpit and the student to the teacher—and with great profit and blessing in both cases, and not for pulpit and classroom only, but for the world. If prominence is the law of emphasis, and it is, then let us put the emphasis in our preaching and teaching where it rightly belongs—on the great and blessed hope of the Church (Titus 2:13) held out by the sacred Scriptures themselves: the one great event for which the Church of

Christ is commanded to look—the Coming Again of the Lord Jesus.

(b) The same prophets that spoke of Christ's first coming speak with equal clearness of His second advent into the world.

It is said that prophecy occupies one-fifth of the Scripture and the Second Advent occupies one-third of prophecy. It is as old as Genesis 3:15—and so is the oldest prophecy in the Bible. (See also Enoch, Jude 15.)

Peter, for example, in referring to this matter, says: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. 1:10-12; see also Acts 3:19-24).

It was Sir Isaac Newton, that prince of philosophers, who said, in his book on "Prophecies in Daniel," "There is scarcely a prophecy in the Old Testament that does not in some way or other relate to the Second Coming."

The messages of the prophets were received and acknowledged by the Jews to be from God. They misunderstood them, however. The Jews were so taken up with "the glory that should follow" that they overlooked "the sufferings of Christ (which were identified with His first coming) of which the prophets had beforehand testified." As a consequence of this wrong

attitude they rejected their "meek and lowly" Messiah when He came (John 1:46; 9:29; Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Isa. 53:4, 5). They also changed the interpretation of Isaiah 53, which depicts Christ as the suffering Messiah, and made it refer to the nation suffering under the rod of God's severe chastisement.

Is there not a similar danger to-day of overlooking or misinterpreting those Scriptures which deal with the Second Coming of Christ to harmonize with our own preconceived ideas of that event? How careful Christ was in dealing with the Scriptures referring to this matter! Note, if you will, the pause He makes in quoting from Isaiah 61:1, 2, when reading and interpreting this Scripture in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:14-20). He read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"—then He stopped; although the prophecy of Isaiah continues with the words, "and the day of vengeance of our God." Why did Christ omit these eight words? Because He was "*rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Tim. 2:15). These words had to do with Christ's Second Coming to judge the world, and with that He was not just then concerned. His first mission was not to "judge" but to "save" men (John 3:17). Similar care should be exercised by us with regard to the interpretation of those Scriptures dealing with Christ's Coming Again to this world. The prophetic word with regard to His First Coming was fulfilled to the letter, so will the Scriptures dealing with His Second Coming.

How minute and *specific* were the prophetic declarations regarding Christ's *first* coming! He was to be of "the seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15, cf. Gal. 4:4; Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35); of the promised seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 17:1-22, cf. Matt. 1:1); of the royal line of David (2 Sam. 7:12-29, cf. Matt. 1:1; 22:42-45); to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, cf. Matt. 2:1-10); of Judah (Gen. 49:10, cf. Matt. 2:5), and of a virgin (Isa. 7:14-9:6, cf. Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38); gifts were to be presented to Him (Psa. 72:10, cf. Matt. 2:11); one of His own followers should betray Him (Psa. 41:9, cf. John 13:2, 18-27); that His death should be by piercing (crucifixion) although stoning was, then, and even in our Lord's day, the Jewish method of putting people to death (Isa. 53:5; literally, "He was pierced for our iniquities"; Zech. 12:10; Psa. 22:16: "They pierced my hands and my feet"). Even the casting of lots upon His garments is predicted (Psa. 22:18, cf. John 19:23, 24). One might go on adding to the list of specific predictions regarding Christ's First Coming and show how minutely and to the very letter they were fulfilled.

The late Dr. H. Grattan Guinness asks, "Could the Jews of the Old Testament conceive the state of things now existing in the Gospel dispensation? God dwelling in the hearts of men . . . national distinctions abolished . . . Gentiles more highly privileged than Jews; religion independent of external observances; and the Law replaced by the Gospel. . . . How could the Everlasting Father become a Child? . . . How could David's Son be David's Lord? Above all, How could Messiah be 'exalted, extolled and very high,' and at the same time be 'despised and rejected, bruised,

stricken, smitten and laid in a grave?' Messianic prophecy (touching the First Advent) has all been fulfilled; and the facts of Gospel history shed back upon the ancient predictions such clear light that to us they present little or no perplexity! So shall future fulfillments explain all that now seems dark and difficult in millennial prediction. Its difficulties are not as great as those involved in the doctrine of the Resurrection, which is held by all Christians . . . (difficulties being no reason for rejecting). Why, then, should the slighter difficulties attending statements of Scripture as to the future kingdom make us hesitate to receive them? "

Why should not the predictions of the prophets and apostles regarding Christ's *Second Coming* be with *equal minuteness fulfilled*? We have no more occasion for doubting the one than the other, and all the reason for believing why they should both be accepted as equally true and certain of fulfillment. Did not Jesus *upbraid* the disciples for not believing what the prophets had spoken with reference to his First Coming into the world to die for its sin (Luke 24:25-27: "O, fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken")? May we not be equally culpable and worthy of censure for not accepting all that the Scriptures say with regard to Christ's Second Coming into the world to rule and reign? The prophets, then, have borne clear and distinct testimony to this great world-crisis. "Believest thou the prophets?" "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath

spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (Acts 3: 19-24).

It should not be overlooked in this connection that the fulfillment of prophecy absolutely necessitates the Second Coming of Christ. For instance, the first promise of redemption, as made to our first parents after their fall, is Genesis 3: 15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Here we are distinctly told that the coming Redeemer should be human—"the seed of the woman." This necessitated the incarnation for its historic fulfillment. Satan is described as "bruising his heel," that is to say, Satan should attack the Redeemer and bruise Him to some extent. This we know took place at the Cross, so we may say that the promise in Genesis necessitated the sufferings and death of Christ, and that, in turn, made His First Coming absolutely necessary (Heb. 2: 14).

But something more is involved in that first redemptive word to sinful man—there is the glorious truth that the Redeemer should "bruise Satan's head," that is to say, deal him a death blow. This the Redeemer has not yet done. All the rest of the promise has been fulfilled. The Christ came, suffered, died, rose again and ascended

into heaven. But Satan is still active and ruling in many ways. His defeat is not yet a finally accomplished thing. But it must be. It is necessary, therefore, that Christ come again and finish actually, as He has done potentially, the redemptive work and put Satan completely out of the way. And is not this one of the things to be accomplished at the coming of Christ? Is not "Satan to be bruised shortly" under our feet? (Rom. 16:20). Does not the Christ, when He shall come again, cast Satan into the bottomless pit and shut him up, finally casting him into the lake of fire there to remain forever (Rev. 20:10)?

Perhaps it might be well to say, in this connection, that the *typical* (as well as the prophetical) teaching of the Bible, absolutely necessitates the Coming again of Jesus Christ to complete His redemptive work. Take an illustration from the work of the high priest (as described in Heb. 9:14-28). The work of the high priest was to offer up a sacrifice for himself and the people, then to take that blood into the most holy place and there offer it as atonement for the people. The people on the outside anxiously awaited the coming out of the high priest in order that they might be assured that their offering had been accepted. We may recall in this connection how distressed the people were when Zecharias (Luke 1) seemed to tarry so long time in the holy place; they feared something had happened to him. The work of the high priest was not completed until he appeared to them again. So is it with our Lord Jesus Christ. While He had no need to offer for Himself, He did make an offering of Himself without blemish and spot unto God for the sins of the people. After He had died upon the cross, He ascended into the heavens, into

the most holy place, into the very presence of God to present the blood of His atonement in our behalf. He still is there. But in order to fulfill the type of the high priest, He must come out of the most holy place and consummate his redemptive work. This He will do when He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. So "once in the end of the age did he appear to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. . . . For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us. . . . So Christ shall appear the second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation" (Heb. 9:19-28).

(c) *Jesus Christ Himself taught in clear and unmistakable language His Coming again to the earth as its King.*

Not only in those wonderful words of comfort as found in John 14:1-3 ("Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"), but also in many other places in the Gospels does Jesus refer to this great World-Crisis—His Coming Again; for example, He devotes whole chapters, such as Matthew 24 and 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21, as well as shorter references scattered throughout the four Gospels (cf. also Luke 17:20-37; 19:11-27), to the discussion of the subject.

That so large an amount of space should be devoted to this one theme is worthy of note, especially when we

understand the term *the inspiration of selection*, which means that only those events, words, teachings, parables, etc., in the life of our Lord which were vital to the redemptive scheme are recorded in the Gospel records. John distinctly states this to be the case: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (20:30, 31). "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen" (21:25).

This fact surely reveals to us what place this great subject had in the consciousness of Jesus Himself—and that is something of vital moment to us, for what was important to the Church's Master, must be equally important to the Church itself. That this truth occupied so large a place in the teaching of the Redeemer should surely mean that it should occupy no less a place in the appreciation of the redeemed and in the Gospel which the Church is called upon to preach. What was primary to the Christ must not be secondary to the Church, the pastor, and the Christian. These things are sure and certain: "If it were not so, I would have told you," or, perhaps with a little different punctuation, "If it were not so, would I have told you?" "Did I ever tell you anything that was not true?"

(d) Angelic testimony is added to that of the Prophets and the teaching of our Lord Himself.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews lays special stress on the trustworthiness of the testimony of angels.

He speaks of it as being "steadfast" (2:2), for angels are "ministering spirits," the very mouthpiece of God (1:14). Everything the angels, who were the announcers of Christ's First Coming, said about that Coming, was true. Of this there can be no doubt. Angels were the companions of Christ in the glory. They brought the news to waiting shepherds on Bethlehem plains that the Saviour had come. They were with Him in His struggles in the wilderness (Matt. 4) and in Gethsemane (Luke 22). They announced to the women that the Christ had "risen from the dead" (John 20). They were present at the Ascension (Acts 1:10, 11). They are to accompany Christ when He shall come again to judge the world (Mark 8:38; Matt. 13:39; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

What is the angelic testimony regarding the Second Coming of Christ? Acts 1:10, 11 is the answer: "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." These words are capable of no other interpretation than that the same Jesus the disciples were beholding vanishing from their wondering view would again come to the earth as they had seen Him leave it. One does not wonder that Peter, after witnessing this sight and listening to the angelic testimony, went out and preached the "Christ whom the heavens must receive until the time of the restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21).

Nor is this passage in the Acts of the Apostles the only angelic word regarding the Second Coming of

Christ. Is not the entire Book of the *Revelation* a message "sent and signified by his angel unto his servant John" (1:1)? "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (1:7), are the words with which the book *opens*, and "Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus" (22:20), is the prayer with which it *closes*. And is not all that *lies between* these opening and closing words of the book a graphic and dramatic portrayal of the events connected with and accompanying the great and glorious Coming of the Lord Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords (see *e. g.* 2:5, 16, 25; 3:3, 11; 11:17; 12:10, 11).

"If the word spoken by angels was steadfast . . . how shall we escape" if we ignore their testimony and live as though they had not spoken to us the word of God? (Heb. 2:1-3). A *blessing* is pronounced upon those who receive their testimony (Rev. 1:3) and a *curse* upon those who do not (22:18, 19). And, mark you, this blessing and curse is in connection with the testimony regarding the glorious Advent of our Lord inasmuch as this is the theme of the entire book of Revelation (cf. 1:7; 11:15-17; 22:7, 12, 20).

(e) *The Apostles of our Lord Jesus bore unswerving testimony to the great fact of His Coming Again.*

We should recall, ere we ponder the teachings of the Apostles that to them was promised, by the Lord Himself, a special anointing and enduement of the Holy Spirit, fitting them to record the truth of God. It was "the Spirit of Truth" Who should "guide them into all the truth," "show them things to come," and "bring to their remembrance whatsoever things he (Jesus) had

said to them" (John 14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:13-15; Matt. 10:19, 29; Luke 12:11, 12, cf. Acts 4:8; 13:9; 1 Cor. 14:37). Now, what testimony do these Spirit-filled, Spirit-equipped men give on this important subject?

The sermons of *Peter* are filled with references to the Coming Again of the Lord, as a consideration of Acts 2 and 3 will show. In his epistles, also, does Peter emphasize this doctrine (see first epistle: 1:5, 7, 11, 13; 4:7, 13; 5:4; second epistle, 1:16-19; 3:3, 4, 7-10, 12, 14). Peter never forgot the vision of the Transfiguration and its relation to the Second Coming. It formed the inspiration of his faith and services while waiting for the chief Shepherd to appear, meanwhile rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Two of *Paul's* epistles (1 and 2 Thess.) deal almost exclusively with the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ from the viewpoint of both comfort and warning, respectively; see especially 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:14-18; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:1-11. References to the doctrine abound in his other epistles, for example: Romans 2:16; 8:18, 19-23; 11:25, 26; 13:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 1:7, 8; 5:5; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 1:6; 3:21; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13 and other places.

How could the Apostle *John* ever forget the words of Jesus to him: "If I will that he (referring to John himself) tarry till I come" (John 21:22)! To this coming John refers in his account of the upper-room discourse (chaps. 14-17). In his epistles the Apostle places the Coming of Christ before his readers: cf. "That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (2:28);

"But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (3:2). Reference has already been made to the fact that the book of *Revelation* is devoted to the great doctrine of our Lord's Second Coming (cf. 1:7; 11:15-17; 22:7, 12, 20).

One might briefly mention the reference to this "blessed hope" as found in the epistles of James and Jude. "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. . . . Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand. . . . Behold the judge standeth before the door" (James 5:7-9). "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints. . . . Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. . . . Now unto him that is able to set you before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 14, 21, 24). So speak these brethren of the Lord.

(f) *The Apostolic and early Christian Church for many centuries after its founding believed in and taught the doctrine of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.*

This should not be surprising to us when we remember it was the doctrine held out by the apostles as the great "hope" of the Church: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). "Looking for and earnestly desiring (hastening) the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3:12). What could be a greater incentive to holiness and faithfulness in service than this glorious attitude of looking for the Lord (cf. Matt. 22:44-46; Luke 21:34-36; 1 John 2:28; 3:3)?

Dr. Fisher, professor of Ecclesiastical History in Yale University, in his book on "History of Christian Doctrine," page 37, says: "That an Apostolic faith

the second coming of Christ is looked upon as an event not remote."

Professor Ropes, expert in New Testament Criticism, of Harvard University, who is one of the contributors to the International Critical Commentary, in his work on "The Church in the Apostolic Age," pages 165, 172, 175, speaks of the "marked emphasis seen in the Gospels on the idea of the speedy coming of Christ," and refers to it as "a belief that was universally cherished" and "that St. Paul looked for the reappearance of Christ."

"It was the hope," says Professor Denny, "that more than anything else gave colour to the primitive Christianity, its unworldliness, its moral intensity, its command of the future even in his life. That attitude of expectation is the bloom, as it were, of the Christian character. Without it there is something lacking; the Christian who does not look upward and onward wants one mark of perfection." Dr. Denny may say, in almost the same breath, that the early Church was mistaken in its interpretation, but that it heartily held to the doctrine of the Second Coming there can be no question, even from his own words. There can be no doubt of the fact that it was the faith of the early Church in this doctrine that inspired the apostolic and early Christian faith and activity. As another has well said: "It was not the hope of the capture of the Roman Empire for Christ; it was not the assurance that the principles of Christ would become dominant in society that upheld and encouraged the apostles, prophets, martyrs, saints, in their conflict with principalities and powers. They knew the Gospel far too well to be deluded by an easy optimism which too often forms the rhetorical flourish to a missionary sermon when we are bidden to look for-

ward to the time when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. That shall be so—but when the Lord comes, not before. Is our Christianity the Christianity of Paul? Is his hope our hope? Is our belief in the cause of the Christ measured by its obvious success, or are we in the very spirit of Christ's commission ready to preach the Gospel throughout the whole world for a witness and testimony, looking for the fulfillment of the accompanying promise: that "then shall the end come"? Are we "zealous of good works," etc., because, as according to Titus, we are a people who are "looking for the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ"? It is for this reason that the attitude of the true Church is described as: "having turned from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven." (See 1 Thess. 1:9, 10.)

It was the joy of this doctrine "that turned the lonely rook of the dark catacomb into the antechamber of heaven." Too often, and erroneously, is this doctrine looked upon as one of dread and fear, rather than of hope and joy.

There can be no question that Jesus left the disciples "looking for him" (Acts 1:10, 11, R. V.). The Church was put in a "waiting attitude" (Titus 2:13). Jesus expected to find the Church "looking for him" on His return (Luke 12:35-40; cf. Heb. 9:28). The pity is that the Church ever left that watching, waiting, looking attitude.

The early Christian Church believed in and ardently longed for the coming of Christ to overthrow the powers of evil and paganism as represented by the Roman Empire, and that He might reign victorious in lands over

which Cæsar's eagles had never flown. In speaking of the wonderful and victorious march of the Church during these early centuries, we must not fail to recognize that the dynamic and motive power of it all lay in the Church's conception of a Christ, not only present with them in spirit and energy, but also Who might at any moment rend the heavens and come down to take to Himself the reins of world government. Even Shaler Matthews, of the University of Chicago, admits this. He says: "The early Christians believed that Jesus would return during the lifetime of their generation. *This hope is on almost every page of the New Testament* (Italics ours). Of course Shaler Matthews believes the New Testament writers and early Christians were mistaken in this expectation. But that the truth of the return of the Lord Jesus is taught "on almost every page of the New Testament" is admitted even by this severe critic of the doctrine. Even Dr. Snowden, whose book against the Premillennial Coming of Christ is said to rank among the best on that side of the question, says, "So the Second Coming is the sunrise hope of the New Testament. This blessed hope of His return overreaches the lengthening day in which we live and work, and is the golden link that binds His first with His second coming. This is that 'blessed hope' which has been cherished through all the Christian centuries and which gives final value to the reign of Christ and the kingdom of God" (pp. 1-4, "The Coming of the Lord"). This same author further speaks of the Second Coming as "the star that leads us on and lifts us up during our earthly pilgrimage and journey."

One whose writings assail the belief in the Second Coming of Christ is compelled by Scriptural evidence to

say: "Nearly every New Testament writer looked for the return of the Lord to establish His kingdom in undisputed and universal sway. Of this there can be no reasonable doubt. That the early Christians did in one form or another believe in a coming reign of Christ on earth is a simple fact of history. This fact must be accepted as such, however it is explained. It cannot be explained away. Intellectual honesty forbids us to take refuge in a process of spiritualizing those passages which record the hope. Those passages meant what they said. The grounds of this expectation provide matter for inquiry. But the fact of the expectation must be admitted by all." Of course, such a writer, needless to say, maintains that the writers of the New Testament and the belief of the early Church was erroneous. He says: "Days came and went yet things remained substantially as they had been. The skies were not cleft nor did the graves open. Toward the close of the first century Christians felt a growing anxiety and a deep perplexity such as Christians feel to-day. Were the early teachers and writers mistaken? they asked. They had been told that Jesus would return and He had not thus returned. But they were confronted with the fact that there had been no such return as was promised. The situation could not be ignored—something must be done. . . . Then it was that another presentation of the Gospel was provided. . . . Mistakes had to be acknowledged bravely."¹

That the above writer does not portray the true attitude of the early Christian Church is evident. Later

¹ J. Albert Moore, in a series of pamphlets issued by Board of Evangelism and Social Service of the Methodist Church, Nos. 73, 74.

on in this volume, in its proper place, we will refer again to this matter. We are using the quotation here to show that even opponents of the doctrine are compelled to admit that it was the prevalent belief of the New Testament Christians.

For the *first three centuries* at least the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ held undisputed sway in the Christian Church. History verifies and proves this statement. It is a fact beyond cavil or dispute. Not until *Origen* introduced his allegorical method of interpreting the Scriptures was there the slightest question regarding the faith of the early Church in this doctrine. Only at this time is there any intimation, judging from the absence of reference to it in some of the creeds, principally the Roman creed, that the doctrine had to any extent lost hold on the faith of the early Church in even the slightest degree. And it should be said in this connection that even in the darkest days of the Church's deepest apostasy there has always been a remnant within the Church that stoutly maintained faith in the doctrine of the Lord's Coming. Such historians as Schaff, Gibbon, Mosheim all bear witness to this fact. Mosheim says, "The prevailing opinion that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men before the final dissolution of the world, had met with no opposition previous to the time of Origen."

(g) *The Apostolic Fathers—some of whom were bosom companions of the Apostles themselves—stoutly maintained their faith in the Second Coming of Christ.*

It seems reasonable to say that those who were nearest to the source of things should know better than those removed from that point by many, many centuries. It was Tertullian who said: "Whatever is first is true;

whatever is later is adulterated.” The *Apostolic Fathers*, therefore, because they were so near to the source of things, should have a more authoritative word on the subject, especially if their testimony is corroborated by the testimony of Scripture, than the word of modern critics of this doctrine.

Barnabas (71 A. D.) cf. Acts 4:36, refers to the Second Coming quite often in his writings.

Clement (95 A. D.) says, “Of a truth soon and suddenly shall He come. . . . Let us be followers of those who went about preaching the coming of Christ. . . . Let us every hour expect His coming kingdom . . . because we know not the day of His appearing.”

The Shepherd of Hermas (100 A. D.), cf. Romans 16:14, as also *Polycarp*, the intimate disciple of the Apostle John, both speak frequently of the Coming Again of Christ.

Space will not permit copious references from the writings of these men. The reader is referred to a book, entitled, “*The Lord’s Return*,” by Silver, in which this and very much more information of a kindred nature may be readily found. It is a book well worth adding to one’s library.

Can we overestimate, think you, the value of such testimony, coming as it does from so valuable a source and from men who were so near the fountain-head of truth? It was *John Wesley*, “the father of Methodism,” who said of such testimony, that it was “the pure and uncorrupted doctrine of Christ.” “History has no consensus of testimony more unanimous for any doctrine or fact than that of the Apostolic Fathers for the pre-millennial advent of Christ.”

“The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of Fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenæus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius who was the preceptor of the son of Constantine. It appears to have been the reigning sentiment of orthodox believers.”

“It cannot be denied that for three centuries the Church believed the doctrine of the premillennial coming of Christ. I think I have gone through all the writings of the Fathers for three centuries and I do not know of a single exception unless it be Origen.”—Dr. Grattan Guinness.

“That the Lord will come in person to this our earth; that His risen elect will reign here with Him and judge; that during that blessed reign the power of evil will be bound and the glorious prophecies of peace and truth on earth find their accomplishment—this is my firm persuasion, and not mine alone, but that of multitudes of Christ’s waiting people as it was of the Primitive Apostolic Church before controversy blinded the eyes of the fathers to the light of prophecy.”—Dean Alford.

(h) *The Nicene Fathers bore testimony to their faith in the Second Coming of Christ.* (See Silver again.)

The *Montanists* were banished from Rome because of their testimony regarding the speedy coming of our Saviour and the deep spirituality of their lives as contrasted with the worldliness of the Church of that day. Wesley says of Montanus, “He was one of the best men upon the earth,” and that “the Montanists of the second and third centuries were real Scriptural Christians.” Mark you, this is the testimony of the “*father of Method-*

ism," who, himself, it is claimed, was a believer in the premillennial Second Coming of our Lord.

That the premillennial doctrine of the Coming of our Lord was the accepted belief and doctrine of the *Council of Nice* (325 A. D.) even Daniel Whitby, the father of postmillennialism, admits.

When the Roman Catholic Church came into the place of supremacy conceded to it at the *Synod of Sordica* (345 A. D.) then the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ began to be fiercely attacked. The state of licentiousness and immorality into which both the priests and laity, but particularly the priesthood, had fallen, forced silence with regard to a doctrine, the very essence of belief and confession of which called, first and foremost, for purity: "Every man that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). It was natural, therefore, that in the midst of such gross immorality the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ should decline.

There soon came a reaction, however, with the appearance on the scene of *Francis of Assisi*. His plea for a pure life for those professing to be followers of the Christ soon brought the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ again into prominence. *Harnack* says: "The return of our Lord was the faith of the Franciscan spiritualists."

The keynote of the great revival under *Savonarola* was belief in the Second Coming of Christ. Again and again he refers "to the nearness of Christ's coming to take the kingdom" and "the promised latter-day glory." This is *Elliot's* testimony regarding this great reformer.

Listen to the testimony of *Tyndale*, the man who gave the English Bible to the world: "We are commanded to

look every hour for that day. Christ and His apostles taught no other, but warned us to look for His coming every hour.”

Latimer, who was burned at the stake for the testimony of Jesus, said, “The Lord will come . . . the day is not far off. . . . When Paul thought the day would come in his time much more shall we think it shall be in our time. . . . Peradventure it may come in my day, old as I am.”

Such was also the position of *Ellicott*, *Tragelles*, *Godet*, *Stier*, *Delitzsch*, *Lange*, *Olhausen*, *DeWette*, *Meyer*, *Jamieson*, *Fausset*, *Schall*, *Bengel*, *Canon Ryle*. So *Calvin*, *Swingli*, *Melancthon*, *Luther*, *Knox*, the *Wesleys*, *John Bunyan*, *Cranmer*, *Latimer*, *Ridley*, believed. This was the faith of *Candlish*, *Guthrie*, *Robert Hall*, *Thomas Chalmers*, *Andrew and Horatius Bonar*, *Nathaniel West*, *Robert Murray McCheyne*. So *Adolph Saphir*, *Gaussen*, *Van Osterzee*, *Auberhen*, *Baumgarten*, *Hoffman*, *Stockmeyer*, *Lange* and *Schenkel* held. Time would fail me to tell of others such as *Spurgeon*, *Brooks*, *Moody*, *Moorehead*, *Gordon*, *Blackstone*, *Torrey*, *Chapman*, *Sunday*, *Pierson*, *F. B. Meyer*, *G. C. Morgan*, *Scotfield*, *Carey of India*, *Moffatt of Africa*, *Hudson Taylor of China*, who look for the Coming of the Lord in pre-millennial glory.

Church of Christ of to-day, what shall we say to these things? Are these facts not sufficient, to say the least, to create a vital interest in and arouse us from any lethargy with reference to this precious doctrine of the Christian Church? Some one has well said that the one great and striking difference and point of sad contrast between the early Church and the Church of to-day is in its attitude toward the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ.

Here we have traced, through *prophets, Christ, angels, apostles, the early Church, and the foremost churchmen* of the centuries, the belief that has been held with regard to this blessed doctrine of the Scriptures. What shall we say to these things? Can we any longer refuse to believe in the doctrine, hold it lightly, or keep silent regarding it? Why should the man who believes in this doctrine be called a faddist or *eccentric*? He is really *concentric*, for he is *on* the centre. It is the man who does *not* believe in this doctrine that is *eccentric*, for he is *off* the centre.

It was *Massillon* who said that "In the early days of Christianity it would have been deemed a kind of apostasy not to sigh for the return of the Lord." "Strange," said the late Dr. A. J. Gordon, "that we have reached an age when it is accounted an eccentricity to love His appearing, and a theological error to cry with the apostle, 'Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'"

The Coming Again of Christ is a central truth of revelation, and one around which the great truths of our faith revolve. No abuse of the doctrine should keep us from accepting it. Indeed it has happened more than once that the abuse of a doctrine has led to the great discovery of a lost doctrine. This is true, as before noted, of Luther's experience with the doctrine of "Justification by faith."

The existence of cranks who hold strange views regarding this doctrine should not dampen our great interest in it. Cranks are useful and have their place; they keep things moving, anyway.

Nor should the absurdities of those who set dates for the Coming of the Lord set us against the doctrine, any more than it is against the science of astronomy that

mistakes have been made with regard to the nature or time of the appearance of certain heavenly bodies.

Who is the "blessed and faithful servant" referred to by our Lord (Matt. 24: 45)? Is he not the one who is watching for His Coming? "But and if that servant shall say, My Lord delayeth his coming . . . then the Lord will come" and woe be to that servant (Matt. 24: 48-51).

Are we ready for a fair, impartial look at the Scriptural presentation of this doctrine, or shall we, like the Jews of old, shut our eyes to it because it does not coincide with our view of things as we think they ought to be? Shall we be fair and honest and sincere in our search after truth, or shall we be bigots? Yes, or no?

2. OPPOSITION TO THE DOCTRINE.

Seeing, then, that the doctrine of the Second Coming of our Lord is so exceedingly important, as witnessed by the testimony of prophets, the words of Jesus Himself, the teaching of the Apostles, and the belief and faith of the early Church and of the faithful throughout all the ages of the Church's history, why is it a doctrine so neglected and spoken against by so many, even in the Church, to-day?

In answer to this question, a number of reasons may be given:

(a) *The abuse which the doctrine has met with at the hands of those who have believed it and taught it.*

It is unfortunate, indeed, that many good people who have found great help and comfort to godly living in believing the doctrine of the Coming Again of our Lord, have, in their endeavour to spread this belief, and, perchance, to exhibit their superior knowledge in matters

pertaining to the doctrine, been guilty of "being wise above what is written" in the Bible. They have *fixed dates* for the occurrence of the various episodes connected with the Second Coming, going even so far as to set the exact day, month, or year in which our Lord Himself would come for the Church. History tells us of the extremes in life and practice to which such belief has led these misguided people. But, should such extravagances, foolish interpretations, and absurd views of a doctrine clearly taught in the Word of God be sufficient to lead intelligent, truth-seeking Christians to forsake that doctrine? Because the doctrines of the "gracious forgiveness of sins" and "justification by faith" were abused by the gross extravagances and corruptions of the Church of the Middle Ages, was that sufficient reason why, under the vision of that glorious doctrine of the Reformation given to Martin Luther, the Church should not return to, firmly believe in, and preach the Biblical doctrine of "Justification by faith" even though it had been so long hidden and abused? At once we unhesitatingly say, "Of course not; that would be a mark of bigotry, stubbornness and insincerity." Why not then apply the same principle to the much abused and neglected doctrine of our Lord's Second Coming?

But, on the other hand, in view of the words of Jesus: "Ye know neither the day nor the hour," is it not equally fallacious to postpone His Coming generations ahead, and say He cannot come again until certain events, such as the conversion of the world, for example, have transpired? Is it not wrong to say, "My Lord delayeth His Coming"?

(b) *The neglect of this glorious doctrine may be attributed to ignorance of the Scriptures.*

This is true, not only with regard to their contents in general, but also in connection with what they have to say with reference to the Second Coming of Christ in particular. It is notably true touching that particular phase of the doctrine known as *premillennialism* as distinguished from *postmillennialism*. An acknowledged scholar in the Biblical world, indeed no less a person than the president of an important theological seminary in one of our largest cities, said to the writer, "What is the best book you can recommend on the subject of the Second Coming of Christ, particularly from the *premillennial* side? I must confess I have never given that view of the doctrine the slightest consideration, having been taught to constantly avoid it as being 'faddish.' Now, I believe it is incumbent on me to make myself well acquainted with the whole subject from every side as being the only fair thing for a student of the Word of God to do. I am firmly of the opinion that a great crisis, if not a decisive cleavage in the Church, is coming, and the point of cleavage will be the attitude toward the doctrine of the Second Coming. I want to be prepared to meet it when it comes, as come it must." This, in substance, was the confession of a great man in the theological world. He was honest, and sincerely seeking after truth. Would that all were as open to truth as he was! Yet, what an amazing confession of ignorance on so important a doctrine on the part of one who was the head of an institution which has for its aim the training and fitting of young men for the ministry and the teaching of the Word of God! And if ignorance of this doctrine is so great in so important a sphere as this, how much greater must it be in the rank and file of the laity as a whole, as well as in the doctrinal acquisition of the

man in the pulpit who has received his training under such men? We cannot give to others what we do not ourselves possess.

A very prominent preacher in the West told me how he came to be a believer in the premillennial doctrine of the Lord's Coming. An evangelist had been holding services in the neighbourhood of his church and had been laying great emphasis on the Second Coming. This had greatly disturbed the pastor. He resolved therefore to preach a series of sermons of the other side of the question—the postmillennial view of the Lord's Coming. Accordingly, in preparing for this series of sermons, he wrote to the publishing house and asked them to send him the best books they had on postmillennialism. To his amazement, the publishers sent word back that they had no such books, that indeed there was but one really good standard book on that subject and that was Dr. Brown's book, but they were out of that at present and did not know when they would have a copy. They promised to send to a second-hand bookstore and see if they could locate a copy of Brown's book. This confession of absence of books on the postmillennial side rather startled the preacher. Finally, a copy of Brown's book came. The preacher read it and reread it. After some weeks of reading he gave up the study because he found out that, in his judgment, there really was no solid ground on which to base the postmillennial argument. He saw that denunciation was not information, that destruction was not instruction, and that abuse was not data for belief. The result was that that preacher became a most ardent premillennialist and began preaching a series of ten sermons on that phase of the Coming of Christ. To his great surprise his church began to fill up

until it became impossible for the building to accommodate the Sunday night audiences, whereas during the previous years of his ministry in that church he had had much room to spare in each service. He confessed to me that he had never really studied his Bible on the subject, but that when he did really get down to definite study for himself he could not but believe in the premillennial Coming of Christ.

How little is known, even among some who teach the Bible, of what may be termed *dispensational teaching*, or, to use a Scriptural phrase, "rightly dividing the word of truth." All Scripture was not written *to* us; it was written *for* us, however. A threefold division of application is referred to in 1 Corinthians 10:32: "The Jew, the Gentile, and the church of God." There can be no true understanding, interpretation, or application of the contents of the Word of God which does not take cognizance of this inspired division. "God has spoken . . . in divers portions and divers manners" (Heb. 1:1). The Bible becomes an absolutely new book when this fact is recognized and applied in its study.

How often we hear passages of Scripture which speak of some promise made to "Zion," and which, therefore, is purely Jewish, made spiritually applicable to the "Church of God." Thus it is that many Scriptures which refer to the rehabilitation again of Palestine by the Jew have become misconstrued and referred to the Church, and really made impossible to fully understand because of such erroneous application. Zion is not the Church; the Jew is not the Gentile; nor is the "Jew" or "Gentile," as such, "the Church of God." Let us not "wrest the Scriptures, as do some" (2 Pet. 3:16).

It is a remarkable fact, account for it as you will, that

wherever you find such "rightly dividing the word of truth" there you find that the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ has received its rightful place in the "faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). And it is a fact, again account for it as you will, that the greatest teachers of the English Bible the world over are firm believers in and strong proclaimers of the truth of the Lord's Second Coming. Name them over one by one as they come to your mind and you will find this to be absolutely true. Is not this a fact worth noting? Let us not be ignorant or bigoted as are some. Let us be wise and understand.

(c) *The Over-emphasis of the Doctrine.*

The over-emphasizing of this doctrine at the expense of other parts of the divine revelation has brought the Second Coming of Christ into disrepute in some quarters.

It is to be deeply regretted that there are people who, judging from their preaching and testimony in public and private, seem to see nothing else in the Bible but the Second Coming of Christ. The glorious doctrines of justification, sanctification, faith, adoption, and others equally vital, are, apparently, ignored by them. If pastor or teacher does not present the doctrine of the Second Coming in every sermon or address, or at least refer to it, he is censured and perchance branded by such people as being "unspiritual" and "not a Bible student." Now the Second Coming of Christ is one of the most precious doctrines in the Bible, but it is by no means the whole Bible. Paul said, "I shrank not from declaring unto you *the whole* counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Let us not be one-sided, but present the full-orbed view of the truth. Let us not fasten the stigma of "faddist" on the Christian faith.

Of course, the other side should not forget that it is equally foolish, fallacious and detrimental to the best interests of truth to *ignore* the doctrine of the Second Coming. Of the two positions, that of ignorance or silence is more harmful. *Silence and over-emphasis—both are wrong*, but neither one is a valid argument why this glorious doctrine should be neglected or ignored.

(d) *Worldliness in the Church.*

Such a doctrine as that of the Coming of the Lord Jesus is not especially palatable to a church or people engrossed in worldly pleasure, and surfeited with the affairs of this world (Luke 21:34-36).

It is not pleasant to be told that we may be taken “unawares” in our sins. It was the deplorably sad and worldly condition of the Church in the third and fourth centuries that led to the expurgation of the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ from the creed of the Church. How could such a priesthood and such a people, sunken as they were in gross immorality, bear to hear about an imminent Coming of the Lord? No wonder the testimony and preaching of *Francis of Assisi*, *Montanus* and *Savonarola* were utterly obnoxious to the clergy and church of their day, and that these men of God were either banished or burned because they dared to proclaim the speedy coming of Christ to put an end to such unrighteousness and immorality.

A dead, worldly Church to-day no more likes to hear this doctrine than did the Church of the days gone by. A wife who is flirting with another man during the absence of her husband is not particularly interested in or made comfortable by the thought or announcement of her husband's speedy return. And that is the trouble to-day with the Church—she is flirting with the world,

and the thought of the Lord's Return is therefore unpalatable to her (James 4:4, 5).

The proclamation of this truth makes a worldly church uncomfortable in its sin, and the average church and professing Christian does not like to be made uncomfortable. It is a fact that individual churches which, as such, hold to and proclaim this comforting doctrine are recognized as being more spiritual than those denying it. This is no mere empty statement. Test it and see. Further, a careful examination will reveal another fact worthy of your thought; that the men and women throughout the country who hold to the doctrine of the Second Coming and give it its rightful place in faith and practice, are recognized as being more spiritual and greater soul-winners by comparison than those of the opposite faith and practice. Again, we say, examine and see.

(e) *Prejudice.*

All too often prejudice keeps men from a real study of this doctrine.

A friend's name was proposed for the office of president of an important Christian organization. From the standpoint of character, fitness and consecration, the man was all that could be desired. But opposition to his nomination was made on the ground that he was a pre-millennialist. A prominent minister arose, himself a postmillennialist of pronounced type, and said that he deplored that any brother in the meeting should be so prejudiced and bigoted as to wish to exclude a man from a Christian office because of his views regarding the Second Coming of Christ. He then went on to say that this Christian layman was very well known to him, indeed, had formerly been a member of his church; that he

knew him to be a man not only head and shoulders above men in his great business, but that his life had been one of the deepest consecration, and that his gifts to Christian work counted up in the many thousands. Further, this minister said, I want to bear testimony, that I have many premillennialists in my church and they are by far the most consecrated and the best workers I have. I therefore move you, Mr. Chairman, that our friend be elected to the office of presidency. The friend was elected. I mention this to show you how deep-seated is the prejudice against the doctrine of the Second Coming.

Another case came to my attention. The pastor of a very prominent church in Chicago told me at the conclusion of one of his services that a theological professor had come to him and said, "I have the opportunity of placing you in a most prominent pulpit, but I cannot do it so long as you hold premillennial views of Christ's Coming." The pastor replied, "Thank you, Professor, I have a magnificent church and people here. I do not wish you to secure any pulpit for me. God can put me where He wants me to be. Further, I have lost my respect for your fairness, and question whether one so bigoted as you are ought to be permitted to teach the youth for the Christian ministry."

Is it not strange that there are preachers who will give the most cordial welcome to men—even to the point of welcoming them to their pulpits—who deny what we may rightly call important and fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, but will scorn and spurn a devout, consecrated, scholarly man and scarcely treat him decently simply because he is a premillennialist? Yet, as we well know, this kind of thing is going on all the time. In a pulpit in one of our large cities, just a little while ago, a

leading Unitarian was given the opportunity to preach. That was in a Trinitarian Church, mark you. Yet it is well known that the doors of that church would be, and have been, shut to a man who is loyal to the faith of the Christian Church, consecrated and scholarly, just because he was a premillennialist. This is bigotry and prejudice of the worst kind. No such small, narrow mind can be susceptible to truth.

Dr. Shaler Matthews, Dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, is reported to have said that "no man can hold the premillennial view whose mind has been really affected by the modern scientific methods and discoveries." So "the modern mind" is to be preferred to the clear and explicit statements of the Bible. It will be a sad day indeed for the Church of Christ when the Bible shall be put aside for the foibles of the so-called "scientific" and "modern mind."

III

THE NATURE OF THE WORLD-CRISIS

BY the World's Next Great Crisis is meant the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, personally and visibly, to this earth. This we believe to be the clear and explicit teaching of the Scripture as a careful consideration of the following passages will show.

1. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST IS TO BE A PERSONAL COMING.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4: 16, 17).

It is to be noted here that it is the Lord *Himself* who shall descend from heaven. This same word is used of *God* in 3: 11—“Now God himself and our Father.” Surely there can be no mistake with regard to the teaching of this verse. A Christ as definitely personal as God the Father is personal is coming again. (See also 5: 23—“And the very God of peace himself sanctify you.”) The Greek language knows of no stronger expressions to denote “personality” than the intensive personal pronouns here used.

That is also the testimony of the angels, "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Here we are told that it is "this *same* Jesus" whom the wondering disciples saw slowly vanishing from their sight that "shall so come in like manner," "in just the same way, suddenly, personally, visibly" (Weymouth). See also John 14:19, 21; Hebrews 9:28; 12:14. Peter, in his sermon (Acts 3:19-21) explains to us his understanding of Acts 1:10, 11. See also Revelation 2:15 for same use of the phrase "in like manner." It can mean nothing else than "just the same way."

We happen to know just how "this same Jesus" looked, for we have a record of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to His disciples. That he had a *real body* is evidenced from the Emmaus story in which we are told that the two disciples journeying thither took Him to be "a stranger in Jerusalem"—that is, just an ordinary man (Luke 24:13-18). When Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples in the room in which they were gathered, and they were greatly affrighted, thinking they saw an apparition, Jesus said, "Why are ye troubled? . . . Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have" (24:38, 39). The disciples told Thomas, who was absent at this time of the Lord's appearing, that they had "seen the Lord." Thomas, doubting, replied, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." "And after eight days again his disciples were

within, and Thomas with them. . . . Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing" (John 20:24-27).

There can surely be no doubt then as to how Jesus looked and what kind of a body He had after His resurrection and when the disciples saw Him vanish from their sight. Well, it is "this same Jesus" who "shall *so come in like manner.*" So Zechariah tells us that when the Messiah of the Jews shall again come to the world that "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced" (12:10).

The Coming Again of Jesus Christ is not to be looked upon as a successive series of progressive religious events and victories, but the personal advent of the Saviour Himself. The disciples witnessed His bodily departure; they would see Him come again, personally, visibly. No other meaning can legitimately be taken out of this passage. From the Mount of Olives He ascended (Acts 1:11) and on that same mount His feet shall stand when He shall again come into this world (Zech. 14:4).

In Hebrews 9:26-28, it is said, "For then must he (Christ) often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world (age) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Here the two comings of Christ are dealt with: His First Coming—to deal with the question of sin by the offering up of Himself once for all; His Second Coming, apart from sin—to assume the reins of world govern-

ment. It was surely a *personal* Christ who came the first time as the Saviour of the race. It will be no less a *personal* Christ who will come the second time to rule and reign. The same Christ who "entered into the holy place made without hands" (Heb. 9:24) is the "same" Christ who will "appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (v. 28). So the cross and the crown—the First and Second Advents are here linked together by the writer even as are death and the judgment, the one being as certain and sure as the other. "The crucifixion and crowning are blended together in one glad message of hope, and Jesus Christ is at once the Alpha and Omega, the Author and Finisher of our salvation. The living, loving, personal Christ in both instances." There can be no avoiding this fact by the sincere searcher after truth.

When God, the first time, brought His "first begotten" into the world, in Bethlehem, He sent a *personal* Saviour, so "when he shall again bring into the world his first-born" (Heb. 1:6, R. V.)—that is, at the Second Coming—He will send a *personal* King.

The Second Coming of Christ, then, will be personal. It will not be His coming in His Spirit, or through the triumphs of His Church, neither will it be by death, even as it was not by the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. It will be the coming of the Christ HIMSELF. The "man of sin" needs the "Son of Man" to overcome him, and the "son of perdition" needs "the Son of God" to destroy him.

The "parousia" is always a personal presence, never anything else (see John 14:3). It is the King Himself—not even His kingdom—that we are to look for. We are told that in papyri from the Ptolemaic period down to

the second century A. D. "parousia" (coming, presence) is traced in the East to the technical expression for the arrival or the visit of the king or emperor. It is not, therefore, a word peculiar to the New Testament. It was in use in the time of the apostles and they captured it for a sacred use (compare 2 Cor. 10:1, 2, 10, 11; Matt. 23:4, 27). The "coming," therefore, is the "personal arrival." This is clearly true of both the Christ and the antichrist as seen in 2 Thessalonians 2:7-9. The "man of sin" is personal, so is "the Son of Man" who destroys him.

It is a serious mistake to make the Second Coming of Christ refer to great moral and spiritual movements such as the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, or any of the great revivals under Wesley, Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards, Finney or Mooḡy. That is not what the Scripture says.

2. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WILL BE A VISIBLE COMING.

"Every eye," "all kindreds of the earth," "the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" shall see Him (Zech. 12:10; Matt. 24:27; Rev. 1:7).

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For

wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matt. 24: 23-28).

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1: 7).

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zech. 12: 10). This must refer to the Second Coming of Christ, for it refers to Him as having been "pierced."

No desert, secret-chamber Christ will He be. As the lightning is seen from one end of the heaven to the other, so visible will the Coming of the Son of Man be.¹

In Acts 1: 11, the word "seen" always has reference to that which is tangible and is discovered with the eyes—something that one views with attention. For this reason it is used in Matthew 6: 1: "Do not your alms before men to be seen of them." It is a word that is closely related to the Greek word for theatre (theatron).

"Ye shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds," etc., the word signifies that which one is permitted to see with the eyes. From both these passages, as well as from the others above quoted, it seems clear that a visible return of the Lord in bodily form is meant (Matt. 26: 64). These words can have no other meaning.

If the ascension of Christ was spiritual and meta-

¹Of course this has particular reference to the Coming of Christ *with* His saints. It does not refer to the rapture of the Church—His coming *for* the saints, an event which will not be visible to the world.

phorical, then, perhaps, the Second Coming of Christ may be so interpreted. But was not the Ascension a literal fact? Why not then the Second Coming a literal, personal, bodily, visible Coming of Christ?

3. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST WILL BE A COMING TO THIS EARTH AGAIN (Zech. 14:4, 9; Job 19:25, 26; Heb. 1:6, R. V.).

We must again carefully distinguish here between the two aspects of the Second Coming: That which has to do with the rapture of the saints—at which time our Lord does not come to the earth, but meets His saints “in the air,” and that which has to do with His Coming *to the earth* to set up His millennial kingdom. It is to the second phase that reference is here made. “And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south” (Zech. 14:4).

Literal or Figurative—Which?

Here we are told that “in that day” the feet of the Son of Man shall “stand on the Mount of Olives.” Why should we say, “This is purely figurative language”? Says Steele: “Either the whole chapter is entirely literal or entirely symbolical in meaning. This being so, we may ask whether verses 4, 10 and 11 are symbolical or literal.” Why should it be more improbable that His feet should rest on Olivet at His Second Coming than that they rested on it during His First Coming? Surely

“the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah” (v. 4), to which reference is made in this passage as illustrating a similar catastrophe that shall take place “in that day” was a literal and historic fact. Why not the rest of the record then?

We are well acquainted with the slogan, “The letter killeth,” advocated by some as a warning against a too literal interpretation of Scripture. But a careful reading of the passage in which this expression occurs (2 Cor. 3:1-18, especially verse 6) will show that this is a wrong interpretation of the words. No reference whatever is made to any contrast between the *literal and figurative interpretation of Scripture*. The contrast is between the (Sinaitic) law written and engraven on stones, which was a minister of death because of the inability of man to keep it, and that new law (“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” cf. Rom. 8:2) written on the tablets of human hearts—that which, enabled by the indwelling Spirit, the believer keeps, and thereby lives. The contrast is between the law and the Gospel, not between the literal and figurative interpretation of the Scriptures. The critics ought to know that.

Is it not a compliment to those who hold to the premillennial teaching of our Lord’s Second Coming to hear the opponent assert that “in order to sustain such a view of the Coming it is necessary to adhere to the literal interpretation of the Scripture, for nothing but the literal interpretation of the Scripture can prove premillennialism to be true”? May we ask, are the kingdoms that, according to Daniel, are to be displaced by the kingdom which the Son of Man shall set up on the earth when He comes, spiritual or literal kingdoms? Were the kingdoms of Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome

literal or spiritual? Why should not the kingdom of the Son of Man be thus literal?

A Guide to Scripture Interpretation

Scripture should be interpreted literally except where the context or the scope of the book clearly indicates the opposite. That some parts of the Scripture are to be interpreted spiritually is very evident, as a consideration of John 2:19-23 and 7:38-39 clearly shows. Where no qualification of language is stated, or where no intimation that the language is symbolic is given, the Scriptures should be taken in their literal sense.

Why should it be considered unscholarly or unfair for the premillennialist to *literalize* the Scriptures than for the postmillennialist to *spiritualize* them? Why should premillennialists be criticized for taking certain passages literally which postmillennialists take spiritually, and postmillennialists not be criticized because they take spiritually what premillennialists take literally?

Shall we say that the *flood* was spiritual? that the *destruction* of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* was spiritual? that the *slaying* of the *first-born* of *Egypt* was spiritual? that the *Passover* which the Jews even to-day commemorate as having been a real historical event, was merely spiritual? Was the birth, the *First Coming* of Christ, spiritual? If so, then we are mistaken in dating our letters A. D., Anno Domini. Should we not interpret the Scriptures literally except where the context and scope of the text distinctly teach otherwise? Alas, what damage Origen's allegorizing method of interpreting the Scriptures has wrought in the Church!

This loose method of *spiritualizing* Scripture does not tend to clearness in statements of doctrine. According

to the figurative interpretation, one thousand meanings could be taken from one passage of Scripture, and one can see how it would be comparatively easy, on this theory, to shatter even Christianity to fragments. What kind of interpretation of the Scripture is it that takes "the woes and curses" pronounced upon the Jew, and which, as history clearly shows, have been literally fulfilled, as *literal*, and then take "the blessings" pronounced upon the Jew for faithfulness as *spiritual*, as a boon to be visited on the Church and not on the Jew? Why should we say that "Jerusalem" and "Zion" represent the Church? When a *spiritual* Jerusalem is referred to, it is generally so stated, or at least the word "Jerusalem" is qualified: *e. g.*, "the *new* Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:2), "the Jerusalem *which is above*" (Gal. 4:25, 26), "the *heavenly* Jerusalem" (Heb. 11:22), the *spiritual* Jerusalem, or "Sodom and Egypt" (Rev. 11:8). In unqualified instances Jerusalem is to be understood as meaning the literal city of Jerusalem.

Some examples of the *spiritualizing* and *allegorizing* of the Scriptures and the ludicrous length to which it may be carried are here illustrated: "The king of Egypt is the devil; the male and female children of the Hebrews are the rational and animal faculties of the soul; the midwives are the Old and New Testaments; Pharaoh's daughter is the Church; Moses is the Law; the ark and the flags in which he was found are the absurd and carnal glosses of the Jews" (Sims, in "Shadows," p. 112).

This thing of scouting the idea that the commandments were not written by God "because God was not a stone mason" may sound amusing, but it is not. Belshazzar found out to his sorrow that the handwriting on the wall was real even though God was not "a fresco or sign

painter." Such frivolous attempts to ridicule the literal interpretation of the Scripture are akin to blasphemy.

Spiritualizers of the Scripture would tell us that Christ comes again when a soul is regenerated (cf. Matt. 1:21); that He comes where two or three are gathered together in His name and is found "in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20); that He comes in the hour of death and drives the shadows away.

Let us, for example, put ourselves back, before the days of Isaiah, and read the prophecies concerning Christ's First Coming as many to-day read the promises regarding His Second Coming. Let us see what sense we can make out of them by spiritualizing them. "We see the *birth* of Christ in those who are 'born of the Spirit' (John 3:5-6) having 'Christ formed in them' (Gal. 4:19), their 'hope of glory' (Col. 1:27). We see the *sufferings* of Christ in the martyrdom of the saints who are 'as the apple of his eye' (Zech. 2:8), and we see His *humiliation* in the divine condescension to pardon vile humanity. We see His *death* in the apostasy and abandonment of truth as depicted in the story of the judgment hall and the cross. We behold His *resurrection* in the rising of souls into 'newness of life' (Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1), and their being 'not of the world' (John 15:19). We witness the *ascension* in the true departure of the faithful saints" (Silver, p. 214). Are not all these things seen in Christian experience? Why not then, according to the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, so interpret these apparently historical events?

We ask, Why should not the events connected with Christ's Second Coming be as literally fulfilled as were those connected with His First Advent into the world? The Jews stumbled over the literal fulfillment of the an-

nouncements touching the incarnation ; shall we show like foolishness with regard to the distinct statements, which a fair interpretation of the text and context shows to be literal, respecting the Second Advent? The Jews stumbled over the literality of Christ's First Coming as recorded in Luke 1:31, while accepting literally the predicted events of His Second Coming as set forth in Luke 1:33. We simply reverse the Jew's difficulty—we make the First Coming literal and the Second spiritual.

The writer to the Hebrews very clearly teaches that Christ is Coming the Second time *to the earth*. He says (1:6, R. V.), "And when he (God) shall again have brought into the world his firstborn." Two things are to be noted here: first that just as God at first sent His firstborn into the world to redeem it so He will again send Him into this world to consummate all the redemptive plans and purposes which the Father intends shall be brought to a head in the Son. Note, too, in the second place, that the word "world" here means the "habitable earth." Weymouth translates the passage thus: "But speaking of the time when He once more brings His firstborn into the world" and comments as follows: "This word (once more brings) can only refer to the great entering of the Messiah on His kingdom." And this he quotes from Dean Alford, than whom there has been perhaps no greater New Testament scholar.

What other Coming should the Christian, even as John in the Revelation (22:20, 21), pray and long for? Surely not a spiritual coming, for he is keenly conscious of that already. He rejoices in Him Whom, though not having seen, he loves. Suppose you were looking for a loved one's return, would you be satisfied with a photo of him, or a book written by him, or news of his goodness

or popularity? Certainly not. It is *himself* you desire to see.

Glad indeed are we to note that one of the foremost writers on the postmillennial side of the controversy sees the weakness of those who would "spiritualize" away all references bearing on the Second Coming. He boldly faces the issue. Here are his words: "That the early Christians did in one form or another believe in a coming reign of Christ on earth is a simple fact of history. . . . It cannot be explained away. *Intellectual honesty forbids us to take refuge in a process of 'spiritualizing' those passages which record the hope. Those passages meant what they said.*"—J. Albert Moore (italics ours). Mr. Moore's warning should be heeded.

It is into this world filled with anger, malice, hatred, war, iniquity, unrighteousness, and controlled by the "prince of the power of the air" that the Christ will come to make an end of iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to set up His throne and kingdom forever and ever. It is to take charge of "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" which Satan showed Christ in the wilderness temptation (Matt. 4:8, 9), that the Christ comes. He refused them then at Satan's hand and price, but now they are His by redemption's purchase. "He shall judge the world with righteousness" (Psa. 98:9). It is "into the world" that God "again" bringeth His first-begotten (Heb. 1:6, R. V.). What a glorious earth this will be when Christ shall be recognized as supreme in it; when war shall be no more; when sickness, sin, and sorrow shall not longer break the hearts of mankind, and when righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea! (Isa. 11:9). "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

4. CERTAIN FALSE NOTIONS AND ERRONEOUS VIEWS HELD WITH REGARD TO THE SECOND COMING ARE CORRECTED BY THIS THREEFOLD SCRIPTURAL PRESENTATION.

It is very clear, then, from the careful study of the Scriptures that certain views of Christ's Second Coming that would make that event anything less than *personal*, *visible* and a *Coming to this Earth*, are erroneous and to be rejected. Let us examine some of these false views.

(a) *There are those who say that the Second Coming of Christ means death; that when we die Jesus comes to us.*

The absurdity of this position is seen if we substitute the word *death* for the Coming of the Lord in such passages as deal with that subject. For example, take John 21:22: "If I will that he tarry *till I come*." Now read it, "If I will that he tarry *till he die*." How absurd! That Jesus was not speaking of death in the case of John (even though He did in the case of Peter) is clear from the entire context (John 21:18-23): "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad

among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Surely any fair interpretation of these words of our Lord lead us to believe that He asserted, to say the least, the *possibility* of John's living to see His *parousia*.

Or take Matthew 16:28: "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Now read it: "Shall not taste death *till they die*." How absurd! (cf. also Phil. 3:20 in like manner).

Did the Jew regard the First Coming of Christ to mean *death*? Certainly not. Then why should the Christian regard the Second Coming as equivalent to death? The predictions regarding the Second Coming are not any more literal than those pertaining to Christ's First Coming, consequently they are just as likely to be fulfilled and as absolutely certain of it.

At death the believer goes to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8), which is a different thing than Christ coming to take the believer to be with Himself (cf. John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:14-17).

According to 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, certain events accompany the Second Advent, such as the sounding of a trumpet (cf. also 1 Cor. 15:52), the resurrection of the righteous dead, the transformation of the bodies of the righteous living, and the meeting of both, and their being caught up, simultaneously, to meet the Lord in the air. These are recognized accompaniments of the Second Coming. Do these events take place when a believer dies? Test it by the death of any Christian you know of and see if it is so. It would be absurd to claim they do. Jesus does not leave His place at the Father's right hand

and "come in the clouds" every time a believer dies. To think so would be absurd.

If these verses are studied closely it will be seen that the Second Coming of Christ is set forth as *the very opposite of death*, for "the dead in Christ shall rise" from the dead when Christ comes again. At death the body decays; at the Coming of Christ it is transfigured, glorified, immortalized. Paul's desire (2 Cor. 5:2-4) was not to be "unclothed" (to die) but to be "clothed upon" with the new body from heaven (life immortal), and that takes place at the Second Coming of Christ (Phil. 3:20, 21). Further, in Matthew 16:28, "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom," the Second Coming is seen to be *the very opposite of death*.¹

Again, what can be plainer than the teaching of 1 Corinthians 15:50-57 on this subject, where we are distinctly taught that at the Coming of Christ we *overcome*, not succumb to, death. Death is then "abolished."

It cannot for one moment be maintained on the basis of sound interpretation that *death* and the Second Coming of Christ are one and the same event. Death is an "enemy," not a "blessed hope." What heart-break and "sadness of farewell" there is in the presence of death, the death of even a believer! Naught but joy, gladness and glory accompany the Coming of the Lord. Death is an enemy, even though conquered. At Christ's Second

¹This promise (Matt. 16:28) was fulfilled in the three disciples being privileged to witness the Transfiguration of Christ (Matt. 17:1-13) when they were granted a foregleam of Christ in the Glory of His Second Coming. This is clear from John's (1:14) and Peter's (2 Ep. 1:16-18) account of what they saw and heard on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Coming death is destroyed (1 Cor. 15:25, 26, 54-57). At death the body decays; at Christ's coming it is glorified (Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Cor. 15).

Further, it should be remembered that *all are not to die*—"We shall not all sleep." Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed unto men (not to *all* men) to die." They tell us that there are two things certain for man in this world: death and taxes. Well, taxes may be certain, but death is not: "We shall not all sleep (die)." How then can the Second Coming be the same as death?

Nor does Christ leave the Father's throne every time a believer dies. Think of the millions and millions of Christians that have died during the Christian era. Christ would need to have come a million times were the Second Coming equivalent to death. But we are told that He will come "a SECOND time," not a millionth time. There is no reason why Christ should leave the throne of the Father every time a believer dies. Is not the Holy Spirit in the Church to conduct the "dead in Christ" into the presence of the Father and to "be forever with the Lord"? Death is our going to be with Him, not His coming for us. "To depart and be with Christ is, of course, glorious, but is not the Second Coming of our Lord. The spirits of our loved ones who have died in Christ do go to be with Christ in happy communion (Phil. 1:23), but when our Lord returns "he brings with him" our loved ones (1 Thess. 4:14). Surely "departing to be with Christ" is a very different thing than "coming with him." It would be a difficult, we might say impossible task, to find one single passage of Scripture that teaches that the death of the individual believer is at all connected with the Coming of Christ. It is the *living* saints who are caught up when Jesus comes—for

even the dead in Christ are among the living ones caught up in that day (1 Thess. 4:14-17).

(b) *There are those who maintain that the Second Coming of Christ took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, that that event was the actual Second Coming of Christ.*

To this we reply: That the events that occur in connection with the Second Coming as set forth in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 did not take place at the destruction of Jerusalem. The "dead in Christ" were not then *raised* from their graves, nor were the living saints *changed* and *caught up* into heaven. Jesus Christ did not then set up His triumphant reign upon the earth.

Again, some of the Scripture references to the Second Coming were written *after* the destruction of the holy city. For example: John 21:21-23 and Revelation 22:20 to which reference has already been made. These were written twenty years or more after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Second Coming is connected with the *gathering*, not the scattering, of the Jews; with the *restoration*, not the dissolution, of the Holy City. The Jews will be *captors*, not captives, "in that day."

The destruction of Jerusalem was, doubtless, a *type* of the Second Coming, as Antiochus Epiphanes was of Antichrist, but it is not the Second Coming of Christ any more than that Roman ruler was the Antichrist.

The Coming Again of Christ, so far as it concerns the Holy City, will surely be the advent of One who appears in its behalf, for its restoration and blessing. But the sacking of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus in 70 A. D. could not in any sense of the word be looked upon as beneficent. It was "an unfriendly act," the spiteful

vengeance of an implacable enemy, and with this agree the words of Jesus in Luke 19:41-44, "For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee . . . and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another." Is this description at all in harmony with the friendly, beneficent purpose of Christ's Coming, when Jerusalem is to be restored and become the delight of all the earth?

(c) *The Second Coming of Christ is not one and the same with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.*

It may be admitted that the coming of the Holy Spirit, the One Who was to take the place of Jesus, Jesus' other Self, was, as it were, *a* coming, and a fulfillment of the promise of Jesus in John 14:21-23 to come and dwell with His disciples, but that it was not *the* Coming of Christ is clear for the following reasons:

The events of 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 did not take place then.

Many of the promises and testimonies regarding the Second Coming were given *after* Pentecost, for example: Acts 3:21; Philippians 3:21; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52. Pentecost was the advent of the Holy Spirit.

Christ did not receive us unto Himself at Pentecost, but rather came to us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

The accompaniments of the Second Coming, as above indicated, do not now take place, whenever a believer receives the Holy Spirit, either at his conversion when he received the gift of the Holy Spirit, or at any later fuller experience of the Holy Spirit's filling he may enjoy—this I think we will all admit.

Further, Pentecost was not a coming, it was a going away, a *departure* (John 16:7).

The Holy Ghost is not Christ; He is "another" Comforter (John 14:16).

Christ did not receive us to Himself but sent His Spirit to us at Pentecost.

Summing it all up then, we may say by the Second Coming of Christ is meant the *personal, visible appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself to this world* to take to Himself His Church, to assume the dominion of the kingdoms of this world, to put an end to all iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness—a new heaven and a new earth.

IV

THE PROGRAM OR ORDER OF EVENTS—THE WORLD'S NEXT GREAT CRISIS

IN this connection one must avoid the spirit of over-dogmatism. Prophecy is not history. History, dealing as it does with the past, we may be certain about; but prophecy, dealing largely with the future, calls for great caution and modesty in the interpretation of its impending events. There is always a real danger in connection with chart-making, and detailed accounts of each event connected with the Lord's Second Coming. Outlines in a general way we may know; details we had better let alone. Exactly fulfilled prophecies of the past assure us, however, of explicit fulfillment of waiting prophecies in the future.

We should remember, however, that the Scriptures do present to us a program, even though general in its nature, of God's plan of the ages. For example, Acts 15: 13-18: "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord,

who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (See also 1 Cor. 15:22, 23.)

Interesting also in this connection is 2 Timothy 4:1: "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

From these passages we may form a general idea of the order of events connected with the Second Coming. There is the choosing by God from among the Gentiles of a people for His name—referring, of course, to the Church—that is taking place now. Then, at the completion of the Church, when Jesus comes to earth, God will again deal with the Jews as a nation. We have also (in 2 Tim. 4:1) the resurrection of the dead (the righteous dead, of course, cf. Dan. 12:2; 1 Thess. 4:14-17; 1 Cor. 15:22-24; Rev. 20:1-6), the order of the resurrection (2 Cor. 15:22, 23); His appearing, and then, His kingdom.

It is not possible to state definitely the number of years allotted to or prescribed for each event connected with the Second Coming of Christ. Sometimes hundreds of years elapse between the lines, or even between two clauses, of one verse in the Bible. For example, we repeat, in Luke 4:16-21 is recorded the incident of our Lord reading the Scriptures in the synagogue at Nazareth. He is quoting from Isaiah 61:1-2. It will be noted that the quotation finishes with the declaration that Christ came "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:19). The prophecy in Isaiah, however, continues with the words, "and the day of vengeance of our God." These eight words Christ intentionally omitted because He knew that a gap (which, up to the pres-

ent, has been nineteen hundred years long) should exist between the year of grace which He had come to proclaim by His First Advent into the world, and the year of judgment which would be ushered in by His Second Advent.

1. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST IS A CRISIS WITH A VIEW TO A PROCESS.

The Second Coming of Christ is not so much a point of time—although it is (introduced by) that, it is a *lengthened period of time*. Those opponents of the doctrine who refer to it in a cynical manner as that “flash in the pan event” and “that nitroglycerine explosion”—both expressions indicating a pitiable ignorance as to what the Bible teaches regarding this phase of Christ’s Second Coming. Just as the First Coming of Christ included a series of events in addition to His incarnation or birth in Bethlehem (which in a real and strict sense was His *actual* coming into the world), such as the presentation at the temple, baptism, temptation, ministry, rejection, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of our Lord—all of which may be said to comprise His First Advent; so shall it be with regard to His Coming Again to this world. It will involve such events as the Rapture of the Church which includes the resurrection of the dead saints and the transformation of the living believers (1 Thess. 4:13–17); the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10); the marriage of the Church to her Lord (Rev. 19); the events of the seventieth week of Daniel (9:24–27); the great tribulation (Matt. 24:29; Dan. 12:1); the coming of Christ with His saints or holy ones (1 Thess. 3:13; Rev. 19); the great battle of Har-Magedon (Rev. 16:16); the judgment of the living na-

tions (Matt. 25); the national conversion of the Jew (Rom. 11); the resurrection of the "rest of the dead" (Rev. 20:5, 6, 12); the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:12-15); the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21 and 22); the end of all iniquity and the ushering in of everlasting righteousness (Dan. 9:24).

These are some of the events included in what we may term "The Second Coming of Christ." Just how many years may be covered by any one or all these events we may not be able to tell. Probably it is not necessary that we should know, otherwise it would have been clearly revealed to us. It is not good to be wise above what is written.

Many of the excrescences and abuses which have been associated with the precious doctrine of the Second Coming have, we fear, arisen from a failure to recognize just this very point: that the Second Coming of the Lord does not receive its fulfillment in that *one act* which we have come to call "the Rapture" (the coming of the Lord for His saints, 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-53), but, with this event as its starting point, it goes on with and includes all these other events, and maybe more too.

When, therefore, we speak of the Second Coming of the Lord, let us remember that we refer to a series of events, covering we know not how many years, beginning with "the Rapture" and ending with the "new heavens and new earth" of that eternal age. This great event, this World-Crisis, then, is a crisis with a view to a process.

Let us now take up the events connected with our Lord's Second Coming as nearly as possible in their order. Just here, too, we will find differences of opinion among even sincere and good students of the Word. All that we can ask for is a prayerful consideration of the

statements here presented and a devout comparison of the teaching with the Word of God. If, after prayerful consideration and the guidance and anointing of the Holy Spirit for insight into the things of God (1 John 14: 26; 16: 13-15; 1 John 2: 20, 27), one is led to feel that the statements as here set forth do agree with the teaching of the Scriptures, well and good. If, on the other hand, one is not led thus to accept them, the writer will still feel that he has done his duty, namely, to proclaim the doctrine, as he sees and understands it, and leave the results with the Spirit of God. We should be anxious for the dissemination of the truth rather than for the propagation of our particular theories of the truth, even though we cannot help but hold to certain views of the truth as we have been led to see it. Probably no one teacher, no one man, any more than any one church or denomination, is big enough to know all the truth.

2. THE FIRST ITEM ON THE PROGRAM OF THE WORLD'S NEXT GREAT CRISIS AFFECTS THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

By the "Church" is meant those who have heard and believed the Gospel, and have received Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord (cf. Acts 2: 47, R. V.; cf. Eph. 3). They are the "called out" ones.

It is exceedingly important that we understand the true teaching of the New Testament regarding the Church; when it came into being, what it really is, and who compose it.

The Church is peculiar to the New Testament. As an entity it is not to be found in the Old Testament. It is doubtful if the prophets of the Old Testament really knew anything about the Church. It was a matter which

seems to have been kept secret from the prophets. Paul, uniquely, seems to have been the recipient of the revelation of this "mystery"—the Church. So it would seem from Ephesians 3:1-6. That the other apostolic writers of the New Testament refer to individual churches, there is no doubt, but scarcely to the Church as such. John, in the Revelation, refers to the Bride, but he does not call her the Church. Indeed, even Jesus Christ Himself said very little about the Church. He referred to it but twice in His whole ministry, so far as we have a record of that ministry (Matt. 16:18; 18:7). Jesus preached the Kingdom, not the Church. He promised that the Church would be founded; but He did not found it.

The matter of the Church is peculiarly a Pauline doctrine—something revealed to him by God in a special way. Just when Paul received this revelation regarding the Church we may not be able, positively, to say. Perhaps when he was "caught up to Paradise" (2 Cor. 12). What he heard there he did not tell—at least not by word of mouth as pertaining to that specific experience, although it is fair to infer that we may find something of what he there received recorded in his writings; and who knows but what the teaching regarding the "mystery" of the "Church" may not have been the substance of it? Paul began by preaching the "Gospel of the Kingdom," but soon we find him referring to "my gospel" which was the revelation of a "mystery," committed to him as a "stewardship"; a "mystery" which is "Christ and the Church." (See Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 1:9; 3:1, 4-9; 5:32; Col. 1:26, 27; 2:2, 4:3.) This "mystery" according to Paul's teaching in Colossians 1:26, 27; 2:2; 4:3 is the calling out of a people from the world for His own, for the purpose of merging them into

a new body of which He, Himself, was the Head—this body to be known as The Church. Indeed it seems to have been this turning on the part of Paul from the preaching of the “kingdom” to the preaching of “my gospel” (cf. also Gal. 2:7, 8) that was the cause of the calling of the council at Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15.

The Founding of the Church was promised by our Lord in Matthew 16:18. This promise was fulfilled when the Church was founded on the day of Pentecost. Pentecost was the birthday of the Church, even though the apostles themselves did not, perhaps, clearly understand it as Paul afterward did.

The Church is an organism reserved for this age. It was to be and is “the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:20-23). According to this passage in Ephesians, the death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation of Jesus Christ were absolutely necessary in order that He should become the HEAD of the BODY, consequently there could be no actual Church until these events in Christ’s life had actually taken place. The BODY cannot be in existence before the HEAD. So the Church is composed of those who, believing in Jesus Christ, are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-18).

It follows, therefore, that there could be no Church before Pentecost, and, naturally, that Israel was not the Church. Christ promised that He would build the Church (Matt. 16:16-18); the promise was actually realized on the day of Pentecost. Israel was not the Church any more than Adam, Abel, Seth, Noah, Enoch, Job (all of whom were saints) were of Israel. Abraham was the first Jew, and Jacob was the first Israelite.

The Church, then, is the body of Christ in this age to carry out His purposes, just as our eyes, hands, feet carry

out the purpose of our heads. This Church is "the bride," when reference is being made to her affection and love for her Lord and Bridegroom; she is "the body" when it is her life and organic relationship to Jesus Christ that are referred to. The Church is both the "body" and the "bride."

Just as our Lord, after His resurrection, appeared not to the world, that is "not unto all the people but to witnesses that were chosen beforehand of God" (Acts 10: 41), so shall it be when He shall come again. It will be to and for those who "wait" and "look" for Him (Heb. 9: 28; 1 Cor. 1: 7), His elect, precious, beloved. It was the circle of believers who saw Him go into heaven (Acts 1: 10, 11); so shall it be when He shall come out of the heavens. Why should He appear to the worldly and unbelieving first? They do not care for Him or "His appearing." They "care for none of these things" (Acts 18: 17), nor are they ready for them.

The believing *dead*, as well as the believing living are included in the "Church."¹ The believing dead are "in Christ" just as the believing living are "in him." Christ is Lord "both of the dead and of the living." "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14: 9).

Our Christian dead are with Christ, in His charge, and under His control (Phil. 1: 23; 2 Cor. 5: 6-8). This is one reason why "Spiritualism" is not true to fact. Our loved ones are not at the beck and call of any medium who seeks to bring them back to this earth.

¹ Some would include the Old Testament saints and the tribulation saints in "The Church" so far as participation in the "first" resurrection is concerned.

They are "in Christ" and "with Christ." "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1: 21-23).

(a) *The Rapture—The Coming of Christ for His saints.*

Under this thought of the Rapture may be mentioned (1) the resurrection of the righteous dead, (2) the transformation of the righteous living, and (3) the catching up of both together to meet the Lord in the air.

(1) *The Resurrection of the "dead in Christ"—"The First Resurrection."*

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4: 13-18).

"Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we

shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. 15:51-56).

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

No General Resurrection

To speak of a general resurrection of all men at the same time is unscriptural. The Bible clearly teaches the "resurrection of the just" as being prior to and separate from the resurrection of the wicked—"the rest of the dead." The resurrection of believers is called the resurrection *out from among the dead*.

There is a rendering of Daniel 12:2 which is interesting in this connection, and which reads as follows: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some (lit. those who awake at this time) to everlasting life, and some (lit. those who do not awake at this time) to shame and everlasting contempt" (after Tragelless). Some of the most eminent Hebrew scholars translate this passage as follows: "And (at that time) many (of the people) shall awake (or be separated) out from among the sleepers in the earth dust. These (who awake) shall be unto life eternal, but those (who do not

awake at that time) shall be unto contempt and shame everlasting." It seems clear from this passage that all do not awake at one (this) time, but only as many as are written in the book (12:1).

"For as in Adam all die, even so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming; then cometh the end" (1 Cor. 15:22-24), clearly indicates—by the use of the word "afterward" and "then," which words, by their use in the Greek, clearly indicate an interval of time taking place (cf. Mark 4:28: "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear")—a lapse of time between the resurrection of Christ (almost 2,000 years have elapsed since Christ's resurrection), that of His saints and that of the wicked. One thousand years is said to elapse between the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked (Rev. 20:4-6).

It was for this "out from among the dead" resurrection for which Paul was striving so earnestly to be accounted worthy of. So Philippians 3:11—"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of (lit. out of or out from among) the dead." It was no incentive to Paul simply to be assured that he would be raised from the dead at the last day; for he knew that all men would be thus raised (John 5:28). He himself so taught (Acts 24:15). What Paul was striving for was to be counted worthy of that "first resurrection" (Rev. 20:5), the "resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14), of the righteous from among the wicked (Phil. 3:11), the "better" resurrection (Heb. 11:35), the resurrection of "life" (John 5:29), of "everlasting life" (Dan. 12:2), of "the dead in Christ" (1 Thess. 4:16), of

“them that are Christ’s” (1 Cor. 15:23), that resurrection which shall admit into the millennial state (Rev. 20:6).

Is not Matthew 27:52, 53 an illustration of what will take place at the “first resurrection”? In connection with the resurrection of Jesus Christ many saints were raised out from among the mass of the dead. The resurrection *out from among the dead* is the resurrection unto life and glory.

Further, Revelation 20:4-6: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years,” clearly teaches that one thousand years separate the two resurrections here referred to. The resurrection of believers takes place *before*, that of the wicked *after* the Millennium.

The “first resurrection” is a *literal* resurrection—just as literal as, and no more “spiritual” than that described in verse 12 of this chapter. The resurrection of the saints—the “first” resurrection—is not to be understood as “a revival of the cause, principles, doctrines, character and spirit of the early martyrs and saints,” nor the spiritual quickening of dead souls into life.

These were not "spiritually dead," on the contrary, they are declared "blessed, holy, just and good." Hence it is not a "spiritual" but a literal resurrection to which reference is here made.

The "shout" of the Lord, "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God" will awake the *righteous* dead only. The word "shout" is interesting. It has been said that it is a word of command given by a general to *his own* army, a signal or sound not known to the opposing hosts. It comes from the Greek word "Keleuo" meaning "to give orders." In this passage we have the only place in the New Testament in which this word "shout" (keleusma) is found. Other words translated "shout" are found such as (epiphonein) Acts 12:22 and Luke 23:21, which refer to a loud shout made for or against a person. In 1 Thessalonians 4 we may say that the "shout" will awaken only the "dead in Christ," even as the voice of Christ at the tomb in Bethany awakened only Lazarus from the dead. So will it be in that day when "the trump of God" (salpizo) "will sound aloud to attract the attention" of the saints of God. No "trumpet" sounds at the end of the thousand years of Revelation 20:1-6.

The football signals which the spectators hear may mean nothing to them, but the participants on each side of the game recognize their meaning, and play accordingly.

This call will take place when the "last trumpet" shall sound. By the word "last" here is not meant that it is the last in point of time. The word is taken from the Roman military code of signals and indicates the trumpet call for *marching*. So it may be said the first trumpet meant to fall in, the second for attention, and

the "last" (or third) to *march*. In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Christ, who is the "second Man," is also called the "last Adam." Thus the "second" in this instance is also the "last." This thought is in accord with 1 Corinthians 15:23: "But every man in his own order"—the word "order" meaning *company, regiment, battalion*.

Just as Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, heard the voice of the Master calling him by name and came forth from the grave, so will it be in that day when the Lord shall "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise." "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life . . ." (John 5:28-29). What wonderful power there was in the voice of Christ! One sometimes feels that had He not called Lazarus by name, and said, "*Lazarus*, come forth," so powerful was that voice, it would have penetrated the whole region of the dead, that every grave would have been emptied and every dead body would have come forth.

Objection has been made to this "out from among the dead" theory, and a claim made for one general resurrection. It is asserted that by the "first" resurrection is meant a "spiritual" resurrection, and that its use in Revelation 20:5, 6, refers particularly to "the revival of the spirit of the early martyrs." Still, as one thinks about it, it would be difficult, perhaps we should say quite impossible, to "behead" ideas, nor can a "spirit" very well "sit on a throne." Ordinarily we should say that "resurrection" has to do with bodies not with spirits.

As supporting the doctrine of a *general* resurrection of all the dead at one time our attention is drawn to Acts 24:15, which reads as follows: "That there shall be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust." These words, it is urged, teach a simultaneous resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. But do they? Let us examine the context of the verse, the setting in which we find these words. It was the belief and teaching of the Pharisees that the resurrection would be confined to the bodies of the just only, many denying the resurrection of the wicked at all. Paul is correcting this misconception. So instead of teaching the simultaneousness of the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, he is teaching that there will be a resurrection of *both*, a fact which, as we have seen, was denied. *Not one person*, good or bad, shall escape the resurrection; *no one* shall remain in the grave; *all* shall come forth. This is Paul's argument; he is claiming the universality, not the contemporaneousness of the resurrection of mankind.

John 5:28 is also brought forth as an argument for one general resurrection. It reads: "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." We are told that the expression "the hour" settles the fact that *all* shall rise at the *same* "hour." But, we ask, how long is that "hour"? How does Jesus Himself use the word "hour" right in this same connection? Look at verse 25: "The hour cometh and now is," etc. This "hour" has lasted almost 2,000 years. Again, take Jesus' own use of the same word in John 4:21: "The hour cometh—when ye shall worship the Father," etc.

This hour also refers to all the time that has elapsed since our Lord's day until now—some two thousand years. That "hour" "was then, is now, and ever shall be," for always shall men worship the Father in spirit and truth. Thus we see both these "hours" are twice as long as the millennium period. How long the "last hour" or "last day" (John 6:39; cf. 2 Cor. 6:2; John 9:4; Heb. 4:7, 8; John 8:56) will be, who can tell? They will be long enough for all these future events to transpire in, if that is the place for them to become effective.

"The dead in Christ—they are everywhere—under monumental piles, storied urn and marble bust; sleeping in unmarked graves; in the lonely churchyard, beneath the moaning waves of the restless sea; those who have died by rack, by stake and torture; those who have fallen in the fields of battle; those who have passed through the gates of disease and pain, and others who have gone as when the sun sets and its colours fade softly and quietly from the evening sky. 'The dead in Christ shall rise first.'"

What a wonderful truth: "The dead in Christ *shall* arise, *shall* put on immortality, *shall* be clothed with incorruption! The body of the child of God *shall* awake. What a miracle in this day when the supernatural is denied! This body in which we have sinned, suffered, ached, pained, groaned, died; that has been put into the grave; this body *shall* rise again. Darkness may overshadow it; the chill and damp of the tomb may mould it; worms may eat it; the elements may dissolve it, yea, annihilate it, but glory be to God, it *shall* rise triumphant over death and the grave." Hast thou this flower of faith in the garden of thy heart? Canst thou, my soul,

canst thou lift up thy voice and sing, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and because He lives, I too, I too, shall live"? Come, my soul, why art thou cast down, and why art thou disquieted within me? Knowest thou not, O child of the dust, that thou art heir to immortality and incorruption?

The Glorified Bodies of the Righteous

The question may be asked, with what body do the righteous come forth from the grave? After all, it is a question immaterial, for God is able to give every believer's soul a body "as it hath pleased him." Because the Scriptures teach a literal resurrection of the body it is not necessary to insist on the resurrection of exactly the very same body—hair, tooth, nail, etc.—that was laid under the ground. "It is not necessary, for example, for the validity of the resurrection of the body, to maintain or defend the idea that, at the resurrection, we are to see limbs, amputated or lost in battle or by accident in far-away lands, flying across the seas to join the body."

The analogy of nature ought to teach us this: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? . . . Thou sowest not that body that shall be" (1 Cor. 15:35-37). The *identity is preserved*—that is all we need to insist upon. What the identity tie is we may not yet know. After all it is not so much a question of material identity as of glorified individuality. The growth of the seed shows that there may be personal identity under a complete change of physical conditions.

The saying of Jesus: "They are the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36), sheds some light at least on this phase of the resurrection. In this world it takes

a long time to prepare and develop the human body to its maturity. From the moment of its conception it passes through many changes, phases of growth and transitions ere it reaches its fullness of stature. But in the resurrection it is not so. Instantly, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" God will then do for the bodies of believers what it has taken many years here to accomplish. All this will be "according to the working of the might of the power of his strength." (See Phil. 3:20, 21.)

Four things may be said about the resurrection body: first, it is not necessarily identical in matter with that which descended into the grave; second, it will have some organic connection with that which descended into the grave; third, it will be a body which God, in His sovereignty, will bestow; fourth, it will be a body which will be a vast improvement over the old one. (See 1 Cor. 15:35-54.)

Shall we know our loved ones, those whom we have "loved long since and lost awhile," when we see them over yonder? Certainly, for they shall be

Not changed, but glorified! O beauteous thought
For those who weep,
Mourning the loss of some dear face departed,
Fallen asleep!
How will it look? the face that we have cherished,
Hushed into silence, never more to comfort
The hearts of men;
Gone like the shadows of another country
Beyond our ken?

"How will it look, the face that we have cherished,
When next we meet?
Will it be changed—so glorified and saintly
That we shall know it not?

Will there be nothing that will say, 'I love thee,
And I have not forgot?'
Oh, faithful heart! the same loved face, transfigured,
Shall meet thee there
Less sad, less wistful, in immortal beauty
Divinely fair.

"Let us be patient, we who mourn with weeping
Some vanished face;
The Lord has taken, but to add more beauty
And a diviner grace."

What a glorious thought that believers die in hope! It is for this reason that the apostle exhorts us to "sorrow not as do others who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The word "sorrow" as used here indicates inward grief as contrasted with outward manifestations of grief. With such a hope for our beloved dead, why should we grieve as others who have no such hope?

How awful it is to have no such hope! To see our loved ones die and pass away from our sight and never to see them again!

What a blessed comfort is this resurrection thought to the believer! We should go to our graves "not as the dog whipped to his kennel, or as the prisoner scourged to his dungeon, but as the prince who wraps around him the drapery of his couch and lies down to pleasant dreams."

"We shall sleep but not forever,
There will be a glorious dawn,
We shall meet to part, no never,
On that resurrection morn."

Surely God will not neglect His saints whose bodies

have been placed beneath the sod. "If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and to make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rose-bush, whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet promise of another summer-time, will He refuse the word of hope and cheer to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation after it has paid a brief visit, like a royal guest, to this tenement of clay? No. I am as sure that there is another life as I am that I live to-day. When I was in Cairo, I secured a few grains of wheat that had slumbered for over three thousand years in an Egyptian tomb. As I looked at them, this thought came into my mind: if one of these grains of wheat had been planted on the banks of the Nile the year after it grew, and all its lineal descendants had been planted and replanted from that day until now, its progeny would, to-day, be sufficiently numerous to feed the teeming millions of the world. There is in the grain of wheat an invisible something which has power to discard the body that we see, and from earth and air to fashion for itself a new body so much like the old one that you cannot tell the one from the other. And if this invisible germ of life in the grain of wheat can thus pass unimpaired through three thousand resurrections, I shall not doubt that my soul has power to take to itself a new body suited to its new conditions when this earthly frame shall have crumbled to dust" (W. J. Bryan).

(2) *The Transformation of the Bodies of the Saints Alive on the Earth at the Time of the Lord's Coming.*

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4: 16-17).

“Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15: 51-57).

“For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself” (Phil. 3: 20-21, R. V.).

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened;

not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:1, 4).

We often hear it said that death is certain for all men, and, in corroboration of the statement, Hebrews 9:27 is quoted (or rather misquoted). This passage declares that it is "appointed unto men (not *all* men) once to die." Death is not appointed unto *all* men; not every human being will die. Some saints will be "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." "We shall *not all* sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51). 1 Thessalonians 5:10: "Whether we are awake or sleeping (dead or alive) when the Lord comes, we shall live together with him." It may be that you, reader, may be among those who shall not taste of death but shall see the Son of Man coming in His glory (cf. Matt. 16:28). Paul does not say it is absolutely certain that the earthly house of his tabernacle will be dissolved, but *if* it should, he is assured of a new body, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (cf. 2 Cor. 5:1). Neither Enoch (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5) nor Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) saw death, but were translated without dying. It has been the hope of believers throughout all the Christian centuries that they would be among those who were "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." Why may not some of us be among that number? If the Apostles and early Christians had a right reasonably to expect such a blessed hope, why may not we, who are so much nearer that Coming after the lapse of all these centuries than were they, expect to see His coming?

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). These bodies of ours must be changed. Here, on earth, *blood* is the life of the body; there, in

that heavenly state, the *spirit* is its life. These bodies "of our humiliation" must be changed like unto the body of Christ's glory (cf. Phil. 3:20, 21). "It hath not yet been manifested what we shall be, but we know that when he (or it, R. V.) shall be manifested we shall be like him" (cf. 1 John 3:2). "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49). We shall regain in Christ the image of God which we lost in Adam (cf. Gen. 1:26 with 5:1, 2; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24), yea, we "shall be like him, and that will be even greater glory than to be like unfallen Adam." As some one has well said, The "type" of Eden was not the creature, but the Creator; so we have the words, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." It is interesting to note that after his sin, "Adam begat a son in his own image," after "his own likeness" (not God's; Gen. 5:2).

We shall regain, in Christ, the image of God which we lost in Adam. It is said that the bodies of Adam and Eve were shining, glorious bodies before their fall (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4-6; Phil. 3:20, 21).

Weymouth, in his "New Testament in Modern Speech," has an interesting rendering of Philippians 3:20, 21. It is as follows: "We are waiting with longing expectation for the coming from heaven of a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, in the exercise of the power which He has even to subdue all things to Himself, will transform these bodies of our humiliation until they resemble the body of His glory."

Here is another "shall." "We *shall* all be changed." Another wondrous miracle. "Theologians may maintain a strange silence about it; the scoffings of the worldling may be leveled at it; the indifference of nominal Chris-

tians may push it into the background," but glory be to God it *shall* come to pass. The Word of God is full of divine "shalls" concerning it, and they are the fiats of God: "The Lord *shall* descend from heaven." "The dead in Christ *shall* be raised." "We *shall not* all sleep." "We *shall* all be changed." "We that are alive and remain *shall* be caught up." "This mortal *shall* put on immortality." "This corruption *shall* put on incorruption." So *shall* we ever be with the Lord. Behold, O child of God, the glorious certainties of Christian faith!

"Soon will our Saviour from heaven appear;
Sweet is the hope and its power to cheer;
All will be changed by a glimpse of His face—
This is the goal at the end of our race!

"Loneliness changed to reunion complete,
Absence exchanged for a place at His feet,
Sleeping ones raised in a moment of time,
Living ones changed to His image sublime!

"Weakness will change to magnificent strength,
Failure will change to perfection at length,
Sorrow will change to unending delight,
Walking by faith changed to walking by sight!"

(3) *The Rapture of the Saints to be with the Lord in the Air.*

"Then we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17).

Not by *the world* will Christ be seen at *this stage* of His Coming. Christ is here concerned not with "Jew" or "Gentile" as such, but with "the Church of God"

(1 Cor. 10:32). In this sense only is it a "secret" rapture. The whole Church, however, not a part of it only, as some (who would put a forced meaning onto the words "unto them that look for him," or, as the American Revision puts it, "to them that wait for him," Heb. 9:28) would have us believe. What reckons a man a saint is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. A poor, weak specimen of a Christian such an one may be, but a Christian, in fact, he is, and as one who has really accepted Christ as Saviour he is to be counted among the number who will "meet the Lord in the air" when He comes. After all it is not the amount of faith, indeed, properly speaking, it is not even faith, that saves—it is Christ. Faith in anything or any one else than Christ would not save. Faith is the hand that reaches out and lays hold of Christ. The coupling connects the cars to the engine; but it is the engine, not the coupling, that moves the train. The whole of our salvation from start to finish is all of grace (Eph. 2:8-10).

The righteous dead raised, and the righteous living changed, will be caught up "together." The word "together" is an adverb of time not of place and indicates simultaneousness. Thus *all* the saints of God shall be caught up together to meet the Lord.

This meeting is to be "in the air." From the Scriptures we learn that the "air" or the "heavenlies" is filled with evil principalities and powers, wicked spirits and Satan, as well as good angels. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:16).

Of these spiritual antagonists, too many Christians are sadly ignorant, not knowing the centre of their conflict, and thus meet defeat instead of victory in their religious experience. Spiritual hosts of wickedness are round about us rather than below us (cf. 2 Kings 6:16, 17). Electricity, which to-day is so common but which previous to 1875 was very little known, was nevertheless in the air just as much then as it is now, even though men knew it not.

Christ, at the time of His ascension, when He "passed up through the heavens" (Heb. 4:14; 7:26), doubtless had to combat the evil principalities and powers that naturally resisted His passing through the heavens to present His finished work in behalf of His people before God. May it not be that those same evil principalities and powers will contest His coming for His people, when He shall raise the righteous dead, change the righteous living, and take His people to be with Himself forever?

Where is the devil? Where does he dwell? He is not in hell, as many people think (cf. Rev. 20:10); on the contrary, he is in the "heavenly places" (cf. Job chaps. 1 and 2; Rev. 12:10-12; Eph. 6:10-12; Zech. 3:1-5). He is not below; he is above. He is not debased in the abyss; he is enthroned in the air (cf. Eph. 2:2; Job 1:6-2:7; Zech. 3:1-2). Satan is above, in the heavens, spying the movements of mankind, and with keen cunning planning his campaign against the sons of men. Into this "air," cleared of evil principalities and powers, Christ gathers His people to be with Himself.

It has been thought by some that because of a use of this same phrase "caught up," both by Paul (2 Cor.

12:2, 4, where the reference is said to be perhaps to the "spirit" rather than to the "body" of the apostle), and John (Rev. 12:5) that perhaps the bodies of the saints may be left behind upon the earth to decay, while their "spirits" alone go to be with Christ, just as takes place now in death. It is, however, a question whether Paul's reference is to a translation of his "spirit" rather than his "body." Indeed he says he did not quite know whether he was in the body or out of it when he was "caught up" to Paradise. The passage in Revelation (chap. 12) pertaining to the "Child" of the "sun-clothed woman" being "caught up" would seem to teach that it was caught up both body and spirit. So there is really nothing in either of these passages to militate against a bodily rapture of the saints, and there is so much reference made to the changing of the bodies of the saints into a state different from that which they have maintained while on earth before they can be translated to heaven (1 Cor. 15:51-57; Phil. 3:20, 21), that we are inclined to maintain the translation of the bodies of the saints to heaven, transfigured and transformed into the glorious image of the body of our blessed Lord, of course. Then, too, it is the teaching of the Scripture that our bodies are the subjects of redemptive love and are to share in the future glory (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:13; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:18-20).

One cannot but look upon that spirit as sacrilegious which, in belittling the "rapture of the saints," pictures it as a "ludicrous sight, a lot of bodies dangling in the air," and "That meeting in the air." We pray for a more reverent spirit than that. The God who could hang the circle of the earth upon nothing, who could translate bodily into the heavens Enoch, Elijah, Jesus, is not to

be laughed at. Further we have here one of the “shalls” of God; “we that are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.” This is a fiat of God—challenge it who dare!

The words “caught up” (arpazo) mean to seize, to suddenly snatch as one’s own and thus to vindicate one’s right to it. Cannot God care for and take His own to be with Himself? Compare John 10:27–29. None can snatch them out of His hand.

We know well what is said of the difficulties of such an act—the raptures of the saints—as viewed from the standpoint of the law of gravitation, but such things have happened before, as in the case of Enoch, Elijah and Christ. Jesus Christ is the magnet. “Just as the needle of every compass in Europe, Asia, America and the seas that lie between, points to the magnetic pole, so will the saints in that day be drawn to Christ above. Take steel filings and cover them thinly with soil. From above lower a powerful magnet. Quickly every particle of steel is caught up and they all cling to the magnet. The soil is left behind. So the holy Saviour, drawing near, catches up His holy saints. The impure are left behind” (Silver).

What a solemn moment that will be when the trumpet shall sound, and the voice of the Lord be heard, and all the saints caught up to meet Christ, to be with Him in the glory forever! How unspeakably solemn it will be for those who happen to be left behind! What surprises there will be at that time! Many whom we expect to be caught up will be left behind, and, doubtless, many whom we expected would be left behind will be taken up.

Not with the whole, visible, professing Church will Christ deal at this time, however. Just as “they are not

all Israel that are of Israel," so not all that call themselves Christians and whose names are enrolled on the pages of the church registers of earth, are really Christians and belong to "the Church" in the sense in which believers are spoken of in the New Testament when the body of Christ is referred to.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:21-27).

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught

in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last'' (Luke 13:24-30).

The following dream, quoted from a pamphlet, is suggestive: One evening at our family worship, I read 1 Thessalonians, verse 4. Before retiring, I seated myself on my easy chair, and mused on the last verses. I dreamed I wakened in the morning, and was surprised to find that my wife was not beside me. Supposing her absence but temporary, I waited, expecting her speedy return; but as, after a reasonable time, she did not come, I rose and dressed. Her apparel was where she had placed it on retiring, and I felt confident that she was about the house. I went to daughter Julia's room, but after knocking several times without response, I entered, and found that she also was missing. "Strange, passing strange," said I: "where can they both be?" Then I went to our son Frank. He said he had passed a restless night. I told him of the absence of his mother and sister, and requested him to see if he could find them. Soon he returned and said the missing ones were not to be found, and that every door was locked, as on the preceding evening. What to make of this strange occurrence we did not know. On again visiting Julia's room, we found her well-marked, open Bible. One verse attracted my attention, "Be ye also ready, for in such

an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." This passage, my wife had always declared, referred to the coming of Christ, while I insisted that it meant only preparation for death. But I am digressing. Frank and I concluded that we should each take a different route, and visit some of our intimate friends in quest of our dear ones.

I called on my wife's sister, Mrs. E——. She and her husband were good, respectable people, members of a Christian church, though worldly minded. After I had rung the bell several times she appeared and apologized, saying that she had to prepare breakfast, for the coloured servant whom she had considered a Christian, had played her a mean trick. She had gone off somewhere, without even putting the kettle on the range, or saying a word.

"But what puzzled us is, how she got out of the house, for the doors are all locked and the keys inside, just as we left them last evening on our return from the progressive euchre party."

"Indeed," said I, "it is exceedingly strange," and I explained the object of my morning visit. When she heard of the mysterious absence of my wife and Julia, she became so nervous I was glad to change the subject by saying that as I had not breakfasted, I would join them. Her husband heard my story with a good deal of levity, and declared that my wife was playing me a practical joke. He was sure the missing ones had secreted themselves about the house, and, when I returned, I would find them all right. At the table, Mrs. E—— said we would have to take coffee without milk, as the milkman had failed to make his appearance.

Presently the bell rang, and Frank entered in great excitement, saying he had been all over inquiring for his

mother, and that in every house he found trouble similar to our own. Almost every one was searching for missing ones. The streets were thronged with excited people hurrying to and fro, many of them weeping bitterly. Then Mr. E—— showed signs of alarm, and related a conversation he had held yesterday with a friend, whom he had looked upon as heretical. His friend insisted that a majority of church members in these days were but nominal Christians, “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” That the Scripture clearly taught that when the elect number of Christ’s Church would be completed, Christ would come unexpectedly and call His saints, both dead and alive, to meet Him in the air. The transformation would be effected in the twinkling of an eye, and although the call would be made with a shout and sound of a trumpet, none would hear it but those for whom it was intended. Then would be realized Christ’s words.

As the morning was far advanced, it was suggested that we go to our business places. Frank had already gone, and I, with a heavy heart, wended my way along the avenue among an unusual throng of men and women whose faces betokened intense sorrow. Many stores were closed, and those that were open did not appear to be doing any business. When I reached my own store, I found that my bookkeeper and the faithful old porter, who had served me so many years, had not yet put in an appearance. My other two clerks were on hand, doing nothing, nor did I feel like asking them to do anything. I went to the Chamber of Commerce, and found the largest gathering of merchants that I had seen in months. Instead of the lively, noisy bustle, a solemn gloom pervaded the assembly. By unanimous consent, it was voted

that "three days' grace be allowed on all contracts falling due on this day." I will not set forth any of the speculations as to the cause of our present trouble, but all agreed that the visitation was a supernatural one and that in some way we who were left were blamable.

In the evening nearly every church in the city was open, with overflowing congregations. Everybody was anxious to know the cause and meaning of the "great visitation." Many of the pastors had gone, but some were present in their churches. All order of service was dispensed with, and noisy confusion prevailed; crimination and recrimination were bandied to and fro between pastors and people, the latter asserting that if the pastors had done their duty, and taught their flocks the plain truths of the Bible, instead of lulling them to sleep with philosophical and moral essays, they would not now be in their present sad condition. In my own church the pastor was present, with scores of persons whom I had but rarely seen at meetings. Audible groans and deep-drawn sighs were heard from various parts of the room. Some were bemoaning the loss of children, others of husbands, of wives, of fathers and mothers. The pastor was speaking when I entered, entreating the audience to allay their feelings. He said, "None of you can realize the keen disappointment I experience at this result of my labours. I am accused of having preached too much about the affairs of this life, and too little about the things to come, and of having kept you in ignorance of the imminence of this awful visitation. I can only say that I have taught you the same theology that was taught in the college; to treat the Bible as a book of spiritual symbols and allegories. But I confess that I was sadly mistaken, for after what has occurred I cannot help be-

lieving that God's Word means just what it says." Here the electric light suddenly went out, and there arose such fearful screams that I sprang to my feet in terror—and awoke. My wife came from the adjoining room to see what was the matter. Oh, how glad I was to see her, and to realize that the terrible experience was only a dream! But the more I thought of it, the more solemn seemed the Scripture truths which it contained, and the more was I impressed with the importance of being ready for the coming of the Lord.

No Partial Rapture.

All the Saints Will Be Caught Up

There are those who maintain that, when Christ comes to receive "his own" to be with Himself, *not all* Christians will be caught up; that all Christians are not "the Church"; that there is an "elect body" within the assembly of believers which is "the Church" properly speaking; that such an "elect" body is characterized by "conformity to the image of his Son" and by "earnestly waiting, looking for and hastening the coming of Jesus Christ"; that those believers who are not thus "conformed to the image of his Son" now and here in this life, and are not "looking for, earnestly expecting," yea, and doing all they can to "hasten" the coming of Christ will be left behind when Christ comes for His Church, and will be compelled to go through the tribulations (either partially or entire), thus becoming "the tribulation saints"; that the parable of the Ten Virgins teaches that some Christians shall be shut out of the marriage festivities, though not finally lost, though they will be cast "into the outer darkness"—an expression

which is said to denote not loss of salvation but the necessity of going through "the tribulation."

Let us examine these statements and see if they are corroborated by the Scriptures:

In the first place Paul's declaration that "we that are alive and remain" (1 Thess. 4:17), referring, very clearly, it seems to us, to *all* those who have not "died" in Christ (that is, all those who having believed in Christ shall be living when He comes), makes no such distinction between believers, but asserts that *every child of God* will be caught up when Jesus comes. The same thing may be said of his statements in 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52: "We shall all be changed . . . and we shall be changed," referring, as is clear from the text and context, to *all the Christian living* as contrasted with all the Christian dead who shall be raised simultaneously with the transformation of the Christian living.

In the next place, it seems to us to be the clear teaching of the Scriptures, that *every* believer in Jesus Christ is a member of the Church, of the Body (so called when its vital organic relation to Christ is referred to) and the Bride (so called when the relation of love and affection is referred to) of Christ. According to 1 Corinthians 12, it is faith in Jesus Christ that makes it possible for a man to be "baptized into the Body of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit." Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—not any act of faithfulness or watchfulness thereafter constitutes a man a member of the Body of Christ. It is in this sense that the Scriptures teach *that the Church as a whole is "elect"* (1 Pet. 1:1; 2:9, 10; Titus 1:1; Rom. 8:33).

Further, while it is granted that "election" involves "conformity to the image of his Son," and while it is

true that there are many thousands of Christians who do not manifest such conformity, the question may legitimately be raised as to whether, first, any real child of God can be such and be not in some degree, at least, conformed to that divine image; second, whether such an expression may not be true of every believer's *standing*, even though it may not be very characteristic of his state; third, whether such an expression should be confined absolutely to the believer's condition here and now, instead of the future; and, finally, why may it not be true that the believer is being conformed to that image and will finally reach its perfection at Christ's coming (1 Thess. 5:23, R. V.)?

It should be clearly understood that "conformity in the image of his Son" is not the *only* mark and purpose of "election." For example, in Ephesians 1:5, we read of foreordination "unto the adoption of sons," and in 1:11, of being foreordained "for a heritage." In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, 9, we are "appointed (predestined) unto the obtaining of salvation." It should be clear from these references that "election" involves more than "conformity to the image of his Son." So it follows that some who may not show as much "conformity" as others, perhaps none at all to some human eyes, may yet be among those whom Christ shall receive to Himself when He comes.

But is it not true that all believers are being transformed into Christlikeness here and now? So 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all . . . are (being transformed—present participle) transformed into the same image." Colossians 3:10: "being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him." Indeed can we not say of this "conformity" as we say of "sanc-

tification" that it is looked upon as an accomplished fact even while the process is going on? We find no difficulty in saying that the believer *is now* sanctified (that is, the moment he believes, cf. 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10-14); that *he is being* sanctified (that is the process of going on: cf. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; 2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 12:14); and that some day *he will be perfectly sanctified* (when he shall see Christ at His Coming, 1 Thess. 5:23, R. V.; Col. 1:22). Why should we then not be able to say the same thing about the believer relative to his being conformed to the image of Christ? I believe we can. That he is *to be* thus "conformed" when he sees Christ is clear from such passages as 1 John 3:2; Philip-
 pians 3:20, 21; 1 Corinthians 15:49; Colossians 3:4.

It is maintained by those who believe in a "partial" rapture that only those who are "earnestly looking for the coming of Christ" will be caught up; the rest of the Christians will have to go through the tribulation. This belief is based on such passages as Hebrews 9:28: "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

There are two or three things about this passage, however, that should be noted ere we rest such a conclusion on it. In the first place, the Revised Version gives the word "wait" instead of "look" for Him. That in itself is important, for it reminds us of Paul's use of the same word as characteristic of the *whole* Church's attitude in 1 Corinthians 1:7—"So that ye come behind in no gift *waiting* for the coming of the Lord"; also the word of Titus (2:13) in which the true attitude of the whole Church is set forth as "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of . . . the Saviour."

Further, it is doubtful if the word "look" or even

“wait” is used to remind us of the oriental custom of being on the lookout for the bridegroom (for which see Matt. 25:1-15; also Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:38; John 14:19, 21; 16:17; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 5:2; Heb. 12:14; Rev. 3:3). Were such absolutely the case, then it might be, as in the case of the “foolish virgins,” that some true believers might be excluded from the festivities attending the advent of the bridegroom. Nor should we forget, in this instance of the rapture of the Church, that the entire Church is the Bride, and that it is the entire Church to which the Bridegroom is united; so the analogy of an oriental wedding is not quite to the point here.

The real point of emphasis, in our judgment, in Hebrews 9:28 is not upon the attitude of the Church at all, either as “waiting” or “looking” for the Coming Lord. The emphatic lesson of this verse lies in the contrast which the writer draws between the “outlook” (or “expectation”) of the believer—which is one “without sin, unto salvation” (9:28), and the “outlook” of the unbeliever which is one of “fearful looking for (or “expectation”) judgment and fury of fire which will devour the enemies of truth” (10:27-29). Not until 9:28 and 10:27-29 are seen in their contrasts will the true teaching of 9:28 be understood. The emphasis is not on the *look*, but on the *outlook*. In the case of the saints it is one of joy; while to the wicked, it is one of fearful judgment.

The same contrast is brought out, we think, in the passage in 2 Peter (3:10-13) in which are the words “looking for and hastening” (or as the Revised Version has it: “looking for and earnestly desiring”) the coming of the Lord (as in John 8:56: “Your father Abraham re-

joiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad"); it was as though Abraham, by constantly looking for that day, actually hastened it. A careful reading of this passage reveals the contrast between the *hope* and *fear* of the coming of our blessed Lord.

What a wonderful experience that will be! Then the prayer of Christ that His own may be with Him in heaven to behold His glory (John 17:24) will be fulfilled. That glorious promise of His, too, will be realized: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be" (John 12:26). **Face to Face with the King!**

"Face to face with Christ my Saviour,
Face to face what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him:
Jesus Christ, Who died for me?"

This is the truth that is giving comfort, cheer, confidence, inspiration and hope to-day to many who are living in the shadows. The present darkness will give way to future light; the present sorrow to future joy; the present loss to future gain; the present emptiness to future fullness; the present solitariness to future fellowship in the presence of the living, eternal, loving Lord and our loved ones who have died in Him.

Again, those who teach the "partial rapture" base their belief on the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). It is inferred, by those who hold this view, that *all* the Virgins represent Christians; the "foolish" virgins representing Christians who are not looking for and are not prepared for the coming of the Bridegroom, and who, at the coming of the Lord, will be left behind to go through "the great tribulation," being shut out of

the wedding feast. In this instance, "exclusion from the wedding feast" and "the outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth" (which was the doom of the "servant who hid his one talent in the earth," Matt. 25:14-30) are equivalent to "going through the tribulation." The five "foolish virgins" and the "unprofitable servant," therefore, are said to represent those Christians who are not looking for, nor are ready for the coming of the Lord.

Let us examine the parables of "the Ten Virgins" and "The Unprofitable Servant," and see if they will bear any such interpretation. In the first place, the Ten Virgins do not represent *the* Church; it is not the Church but "the kingdom of heaven" that is likened to Ten Virgins. The "kingdom of heaven" represents Christendom, the *professing* Church, not the real Church, which is the Body and Bride of Christ.

Secondly, the phrases "wise" and "foolish" remind us of similar expressions used by our Lord in this same Gospel (see 7:24-29). The "wise" man was the man who built his house upon the rock, who not only heard but obeyed the teachings of the Christ. The "foolish" man was the man who built his house upon the sand, who heard but did not obey the teachings of the Lord. The "wise" man was saved; the "foolish" man was lost. Further, the words, "I know you not" (Matt. 25:12) spoken to the "foolish virgins" are similar to those addressed to the mere professors of religion—the "foolish" builders in Matthew 7:21-23, cf. 2 Timothy 3:5. A similar expression is used to denote those who are absolutely shut out of the kingdom (Luke 13:24-30). It is difficult for us, therefore, to see how the "foolish virgins" and the "unfaithful servant" were simply barred out of

the festivities temporarily. The phrases used to denote their fate indicate, in our judgment, a finally lost condition (cf. Luke 13:28-30).

In the third place, it seems to be beside the facts in the case to say that the "five foolish virgins" represent the Christians who are not looking for and waiting for the coming Bridegroom, for if there is one thing that stands out clearly in the narrative it is the fact that the very thing they were doing was that of looking and waiting for the Bridegroom. Indeed, perhaps it is not too much to say that they made *some* preparation for his coming. It may not have been the right kind of preparation; it may have been but profession and true grace of God in the heart—all of this may be, doubtless is, true, nevertheless the striking fact is there: These "five foolish virgins" *went out to meet the bridegroom* just as much as did the "five wise virgins." It does not seem fair, then, to liken the "foolish virgins" to those Christians who are *not* looking for the coming of the Lord. Rather, it would seem to us, ought we to say that they perhaps better represent those professing Christians to-day who, to all appearances, are Christians and waiting for the coming Lord, but who are mere professors, minus the true saving grace of God in their hearts (cf. Matt. 7:21-23, cf. 2 Tim. 3:5).

It is interesting to note in this connection that "that servant" who did not watch for his Lord's coming and is therefore "a wicked servant" (Matt. 24:45-51), is "cast into the outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," just as is the "unprofitable servant" in Matthew 25:30. Further, they are *both* described as "bond-servants" (24:50 and 25:30). Of this surely there can be no doubt.

Nor should Philippians 2:15—"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world" be used to differentiate those Christians who are looking for their coming Lord from those who are not thus in an expectant attitude. This verse is surely characteristic of all true Christians in a greater or less degree. "Ye are the light of the world" is true of all Christians and is not to be confined to an elect few among them. If what this verse has to say is not true of any man or woman in some degree then that man or woman has no right to claim to be in saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The "grace of God" is not simply the unmerited favour of God, it is that unmerited favour actively manifesting itself not only in saving its recipient but also in keeping him separate from the world and causing him to be a light for God. The "grace" of God is not passive merely; it is an active agent also in producing such a life in this world as Philippians 2:15 and Titus 2:11-13 so vividly portray.

What an empty and awful world this will be when all the believers are caught up into the heavenlies from the earth and when all the wicked principalities and powers come down from the heavenlies to the earth! No wonder such times are described as being "filled with evil workers, swarming like locusts," "filling the air like smoke from a pit."

Wait, old world, and see how much you will miss the Church; the Church—the salt, the light and the cream of the world! What kind of a world will this be with no salt to stem its rotting corruption, with no light to banish its gross darkness? What kind of a world will

this be with no real spiritual preachers, no live churches, no spiritual Christians, no active soul winners, no hymns, prayers or family altars?

Think of living in a city with all these things gone and their places filled by Satan, demons, liars, profligates, the immoral, the impure; for, remember that, while the saints are taken up, Satan and his evil hosts come down. Who would want to live in a world with hell let loose and with the devil in full control of things?

Gone will be the saints as Enoch was gone, and his friends looking all over for him and unable to find him, though he had not died (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5). Gone as Elijah, and his friends searching the mountains for him (2 Kings 2:15-17).

“Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come” (Isa. 21:11, 12). “Morning” to those who are ready; “night,” O how dark the night! to those who are not ready!

The raised Christian dead and the changed Christian living are caught up together to be “forever with the Lord.” “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Nor do we believe in a “secret rapture” which would leave some of the saints behind. When the Lord shall come for His saints He will leave none behind, even though some be very “weak and poor Christians.” All

true believers are members of His body and will therefore be joined to the Head in that day. No imperfect, mutilated body will the Head have. It is the Head that comes for His body—the entire Church. It is the Bridegroom that comes for His Bride—the entire Church, all “the dead in Christ” and all “we which are alone and remain” shall be caught up.

What a gathering of the faithful that will be! Think of the joy of meeting! Can you imagine the joy of the widow of Nain when her son was brought back from the dead? Or the joy of Martha and Mary when Lazarus was restored to life? Or of Jairus when his daughter, who had died, was again given back to him?

“Beyond the silent river
In the glory summer land,
In the beautiful forever,
Where the jewelled city stands,
Where ever-blooming flowers
Send forth their sweet perfume,
My heart’s most loved and cherished
In heavenly beauty bloom.

“And when I cross that river,
The first I will adore,
The first to bid me welcome,
Upon that golden shore,
Will be my loving Saviour,
The One who died for me,
That in the long forever,
From sin I might be free.

“The next one who will greet me,
In the mansions fair and bright,
Will be my sainted mother,
Arrayed in garments white,

And then that gray-haired father,
Close pressing by her side,
Will clasp my hand with fervour,
Just o'er the swelling tide.

“Then curly-headed brother,
And little sister dear,
And bright-eyed little baby,
With merry laugh and cheer,
Will all then cluster about me
To bid me welcome home,
And watch with me the gathering
Of loved ones yet to come.

“Oh, the joy that there awaits me,
When I reach that golden shore,
And clasp the hands of loved ones,
To part with them no more.”

(b) *The Reward of the Saints—The Judgment Seat of Christ* (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:4, 12; 2:16; 1 Cor. 3:10-16; 2 Tim. 4:8, cf. Luke 19:11-27, Matt. 25:14-30).

The “judgment seat of Christ” is the tribunal before which the *saints* shall stand to give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad. • We are justified by faith; we are rewarded according to our works. Grace has guaranteed us a place in Christ by faith. Our position in the life to come, however, is determined by our faithfulness in the grace and faith of Jesus Christ. This is *not a judgment as to life or death*—that was settled, once for all, for the believer at the Cross, at the time of conversion (John 3:18; 5:24; 12:31, 32).

The believer is building daily for eternity. Every deed, word, thought beautifies or mars his eternal re-

ward. "If any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

This passage, while referring primarily to teachers and ministers of the Word of God, yet has a very fitting application to all believers who are building upon Christ as the Foundation of their hopes. Degrees of punishment for the lost we believe there will be (Luke 12:47, 48), why not degrees of reward for the saints (Luke 19:11-27)? Are not some made rulers over *five* and others over *ten* cities? Is there not such a thing as the *least* and the *greatest* in the kingdom?

The thought of the "judgment seat of Christ" is of great comfort to the believer. Not always is he rewarded in this life for the good he has done and is doing. Oft-times the opposite is true. He is misrepresented, maligned, misjudged, persecuted, hounded, cursed. Sinister motives are impugned to his good endeavours. At times he may be tempted to ask, "Where is the God of judgment" (Mal. 2:16, 17)?

"Careless seems the great Avenger.
History's pages but record
One death grapple in the darkness
'Twixt old systems and the Word.
Right forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne.
Yet, that scaffold sways the future,
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God, keeping watch o'er His own."

So it seems at times. But it shall not always be so. "Hope is sown for the righteous." He will come into his own some day. The cup of cold water given in the name of Christ to a thirsty soul shall meet its reward. The kindly word and deed, all unappreciated here, will one day merit the Master's "Well done."

It was this thought that comforted the heart of Kipling, as evident in his poem, "The Last Picture," when under a strain of seathing criticism by those who misunderstood him. He wrote:

"When earth's last picture is painted,
And the tubes are all twisted and dried;
When the oldest colours have faded,
And the youngest critic has died—
We shall rest—and faith we shall need it;
Lie down for an æon or two;
Till the Master of all good workmen
Shall set us to work anew.

"Then those that were good shall be happy,
Shall sit in a golden chair
And splash at a ten-leagued canvas
With brushes of comet's hair.
Have real saints to paint from—
Mary, Magdalen, Paul—
Shall paint for an age at a sitting,
And never grow tired at all.

"Then only the Master shall praise us,
And only the Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money,
And no one shall work for fame.
But all for the joy of working,
And each in his separate star,
Shall paint the thing as he sees it,
For the God of things as they are."

One day, when Verdi had rendered one of his splendid compositions in Florence, he was greeted with tremendous applause. He stood motionless as the loud applause swirled around him, his features not seeming to betray any recognition of the appreciation of the audience. His eyes were fixed on one spot in the great auditorium—the place where his teacher stood. Verdi was watching for the approval of his master. What cared he for the applause of the crowds if his teacher was not well-pleased? Then, with a smile and nod of approval from the master, Verdi's face was wreathed in smiles. The master was pleased. So shall it be in that great day at "the judgment seat of Christ." If only we can hear the words from His lips, "Well done, good and faithful servant," that will be compensation and reward enough, for all the misunderstandings and misrepresentations of life, and for the good we have done.

My little girl came home one day from school. It was the last day of school. She placed on the table in front of me a copy-book which she had filled with her own writing during the weeks of school term. She said, "Papa, will you look through my copy-book?" I said, "Certainly, Dorothy, I will be delighted to do so." Page after page I turned over; not a blot, not an erasure, not a mistake did I see. Being pleased beyond measure with the work she had done, I put my hand in my pocket, took out a coin, and offered it to her as a reward for her splendid work. I shall never forget to my dying day the look of mingled pleasure and pain on her face, as she said to me, the tears streaming from her deep blue eyes, "Thank you so much, papa, I do not want the money; I am so happy and satisfied to hear you say 'Well done.' " So shall it be in that blest day when

we shall stand before the Master. Just to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant"—that will be more than compensation for all that we have done for Him and for others.

Just *when* "the judgment seat of Christ" will be set or the judgment take place—whether immediately after the Church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air, or immediately before He comes with His Church to set up His Millennial reign upon the earth we may not be able, definitely, to state. Of this we may rest assured, however, that it will surely come to pass.

(c) *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb* (Rev. 19:6, 10; cf. John 3:29; Eph. 5:23-32).

It is also difficult to definitely decide just at what point of time the Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place, whether at the time of the Rapture, or immediately before Christ comes with His saints to set up His Millennial reign on the earth (Rev. 19), or after the Millennial (Rev. 21), in that case the statement regarding the Marriage in Revelation 19 being anticipatory of the event which in reality does not take place until chapter 21—after the thousand years' reign upon the earth. The strongest indications are that the event is premillennial. The marriage actually takes place—that is the main thing; of that we are certain.

The true Church (as contrasted with the "harlot"—the apostate church) is the bride of Christ. The terms "body" and "bride" are both true of the Church: "body" is referred to when the vital and organic relation of the Church to Christ is intended; "bride," when its affection and love relation is to be emphasized. The true Church is the "body," "bride" and "wife" of Christ. Some one has well said that the "bride" is the

temporary name, and "wife" the enduring name of the Church. The saints of God in the true Church of Jesus Christ during the Church dispensation—these are the "bride" of Christ to whom He will one day be united in Marriage.

Some have thought that this symbol of the "bride" or "wife" indicates the *redeemed* alluded to in so many places in the book of Revelation previous to chapter 19 (cf. 7:9; 12:1; 14:1; 17:14).

Just who "those bidden to the wedding" are we may not be able, dogmatically, to say. John the Baptist refers to himself as being "the friend of the Bridegroom" (John 3:29). Jesus refers to the "children of the bride-chamber" (Matt. 9:15; cf. also 22:2, and 25:1-10 for references to the subject of marriage). May it not be that the saints of the old dispensation will be those or at least among those who are "bidden" to the wedding feast?

"The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is a figure under which is depicted the complete union between Christ and His faithful Church. . . . It stands in contrast with the fornication of the 'harlot'—the union of the unfaithful portion of Christ's (professing) Church with the powers of the world."

3. THE SECOND ITEM ON THE PROGRAM WILL AFFECT THE APOSTATE CHURCH AND THE JEW.

We do not know how many years will intervene between the "Rapture of the Church" (1 Thess. 4:14-17) and the introduction of the "seventieth week" (Dan. 9:24-27). A sufficient time, however, must elapse to permit of the appearance and development of certain

systems and personages, such as antichrist, and the false prophet.

We shall discuss this section as follows: First, the events following the Rapture and preceding the seventieth week; second, the seventieth week itself; third, the events closing the seventieth week.

(a) *The Events Following the Rapture and Preceding the Seventieth Week.*

World government is still in the hands of the Gentiles. "The times of the Gentiles" is still in vogue.

A word or two in explanation of the phrase "the times of the Gentiles" may be in place here. The human race has been placed on trial by God. The government of the race was committed into the hands of individuals like Adam and Noah. This experiment, we know, ended with total failure. Adam sinned and brought ruin and death upon himself and his posterity. Noah sinned and the deluge came and swept the race, except eight persons, off the earth (Gen. 7-9). God then chose, through Abram (Gen. 12), a single nation, the Hebrew, to represent Him in the government and control of the world and for the purpose of disseminating the knowledge of the true God and the great facts of redemption. The descendants of Abraham thus became God's chosen people. They soon forgot, however, the purpose for which they were chosen. Becoming selfish and exclusive, they failed to disseminate among the people of the world the knowledge of God which had been given them for the purpose of making God and His will known among the Gentiles. Having failed, therefore, to fulfill the mission for which they were created, they, too, forfeited the right of world government.

In the prophecy of Ezekiel (8:3-6; 10:18; 11:23)

we have a graphic description of the departure of the glory of God from the temple of Jerusalem. At first it hovered over the door of the temple as though loath to leave, then, finally it departed toward the east. "The temple of God" is thereafter called "the temple *at Jerusalem*," and so, later, "the feasts of the Lord" (Ex. 13:6) became "the feasts of the Jews," as "My Father's house" (John 2:16) became "your house" (Matt. 23:38). Soon after, the chosen race was carried into captivity. So ended the Jewish period of world government.

"The times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), under Nebuchadnezzar, then began. This period is well represented by Nebuchadnezzar's colossal "image" (Dan. 2), and also by the wild "beasts" (Dan. 7, 8 and 11)—the "image" representing the "times of the Gentiles" in man's estimation, the ferocious "beasts" as viewed in God's sight. How differently God and man may view the same things!

Just how long the times of the Gentiles will last we do not know. There has been much unwarranted speculation on the subject. Some have thought that the seven years, during which time Nebuchadnezzar was driven into the fields to live as a beast of the field (Dan. 4), are to be reckoned as each day representing a year of 360 days. This would make "the times of the Gentiles" 2,520 years, that is, if we begin with 600 B. C., the time of Nebuchadnezzar. No one can speak dogmatically on this matter. We do know, however, that the times of the Gentiles indicate a specific period and will have an "end" (Luke 21:24), and will close as they began—with the putting up and worship of an "image" (cf. Dan. 2, 4, 7; Rev. 13:14, 15; cf. Matt. 24:15).

It is interesting to note how "the times of the Gentiles" are portrayed. In the first place, they are described in Daniel (2:31-45) under the symbolism of a great colossal image, indicating that the rule of the Gentiles, as man estimates it, is one of apparent nobility and admiration. In 7:2-7 and 16-21, they are represented under the figure of ferocious beasts such as the lion, bear, leopard and goat, as God sees them, their real nature. Does this indicate the true ferocious animal nature of Gentile rule? Is it not remarkable that the national emblems which the nations have chosen to represent them are those of ferocious beasts, such as the *lion*, the *bear*, the *tiger*, the *eagle*? So, if we scratch the skin of the present civilization, noble and admirable as it may seem to be, we will find the fierce, ferocious, unreasoning beast beneath, as the history of the 1914-1918 world war unquestionably demonstrated.

"The times of the Gentiles" may be described as "Man's Day" (1 Cor. 4:5, R. V.). The government of the world is to-day in the hands of man, just as in "The Day of the Lord" and "The Day of Christ" the governments of the world will be in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The times of the Gentiles" will head up in one person—the antichrist (cf. 2 Thess. 2:7-10; Rev. 13:1-18).

1. *The Rise of the Antichrist.*

The political condition and development during the time between the Rapture and the introduction of the Seventieth Week proper: considered *politically*, it would seem as though the government of the world would merge into a *one man power*. This one man will be the "antichrist," who is a real person, not a mere system. He is called the "man of sin," the "son of perdition" (2

Thess. 2:3). His number is "the number of man" (Rev. 13:18). The number 666 may mean that the antichrist is human, not the devil, not God. (See Ezek. 28:2, 9.) Just as 888 is the number of the resurrection and eternal triumph, so 666 may indicate that no matter how great a person the antichrist may be he is not supernatural or divine. Ezekiel 28:2, 9 is interesting in this connection: "Because thy heart is lifted up and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man and not God. Thou didst set thy heart as the heart of God. . . . Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou art a man and not God." Even though we who now live may not be able clearly to tell who the antichrist is, those who live when he appears will be able to recognize him by this inspired description. He is finally cast into the lake of fire (19:20; 20:10). He will doubtless come from the East (probably Syria), and will have the combined force and power of the four kingdoms spoken of in Daniel and Revelation which, it seems, will again rise up in the last day and be merged into the revived Roman Empire. So in Revelation 13:1-8 the beast from the sea, which probably represents the antichrist, is represented as being identified with Babylon (lion), with Medo-Persia (bear), Greece (leopard) and with Rome (seven heads and ten horns). The antichrist is the sum total and representation of world government.

Some have thought that the antichrist might in some sense or other be a reincarnation (of Judas, possibly, because cf. John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3; Rev. 13:3), for he once had lived, then died, and will be raised again by Satan. He was the seventh horn and is also the eighth.

He goeth into the pit and cometh up out of the pit (Rev. 13:3; 17:7, 8).

The antichrist is a “controlling *military* power”—“Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:4). “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them” (Rev. 13:7).

He is a “controlling *religious* power”—“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven” (Rev. 13:4-6). “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him” (13:8). “And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed” (13:12). “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (13:15).

He is a “controlling *commercial* power”—“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:16, 17).

He is a “controlling *supra-natural* power”—“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to con-

tinue forty and two months . . . and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations'' (Rev. 13:4, 5, 7).

That present national and political conditions are tending toward and may resolve themselves into such a *one man power* is evident from the following extract which is taken from a book written by Mr. G. E. Tarner, of London, entitled, "*A Future Roman Empire*—a possible result and solution of some modern political and economical problems." On page 2 of this book the author says: "In a former treatise on some conspicuous developments of the time—'State Provided Education,' 'Combinations in Restraint of Trade' and 'The Gradual Transfer of Political Power to the Largest Class'—I attempted to show that their mutual action, proceeding unchecked along present lines, would result in producing a state of things in the form of a universal anarchy that, humanly speaking, could only be effectively dealt with by a Roman Emperor." In the world to-day combination, not competition, is preëminently characteristic of trade conditions.

The Independent (January 5, 1914) made reference to "a capitol of all the world." The sum of \$150,000, it was stated, had already been expended in the drawing up of plans for this great world capitol, and, strange to say, Babylon is the site chosen for the capitol of the world's empire. It seems likely, therefore, that the antichrist may rule and reign over and from Babylon (which probably will be the ancient Babylon restored) as its capital. Many able expositors believe that Babylon is yet to be rebuilt—that it has never been destroyed as indicated in the prophecy.

Sir William Hillocks, who is said to have expended

thirty millions of dollars in irrigating the Nile Valley, and it is reported that a much larger sum is to be expended for the irrigating of the Mesopotamian Valley in order that it may become, what it probably was in the beginning, the Eden spot of the world. Dr. Haldeman, of New York, holds in his possession a letter from which the following extract is taken: "Could we but see how the old canals of the Euphrates Valley have been redug and how every sign indicates the 'drive to the East,' we would be startled by the near approach of the prophetic hour when the Golden City shall once more rise in all her power and glory." Even now there is a railroad to Bagdad, which runs over or close to the site of the ancient city of Babylon, and already merchandise is passing over it from the East to Europe.

Why may not the map of Europe, changing as it is constantly these epoch-making days, show the political divisions of the old Roman Empire restored? Why may it not be likely that as the Pope of Rome, centuries ago, crowned Charlemagne emperor of Rome, which was equivalent to being ruler of the whole world, so anti-christ should be crowned emperor of the restored Roman Empire? (See Rev. 17:12, 13.)

It is remarkable that the insignia of Germany is an eagle with two heads but one body, thereby signifying that the Roman Empire, while divided into East and West (as indicated by the two heads) is yet one (as indicated by one body). It should not go unnoticed that Russia has (or had) the same insignia.

Why should it be thought incredible in view of the strange political and geographical changes that are taking place in Europe to-day that the political divisions of Europe should change so that Germany, Russia, Greece,

Turkey and Asia Minor should form one confederated state with such a person as antichrist at the head (Rev. 17:12, 13)?¹

2. *The Great Apostasy.*

We come now to consider the condition of the world, morally and religiously, between the time of the Rapture and the Seventieth Week.

Doubtless after the true Church, which is the "body" and the "bride" of the Christ (Rev. 19:6-9; 21:2, 9, cf. Eph. 5:25-32), is taken up into heaven, the professing church (the "harlot," 17:1-7, cf. 2 Cor. 11:2, 3) will doubtless go on with its worship, services, and activities just as before the saints were taken up to be with the Lord. There will be, however, a marked growth in the apostasy within the professing church—the ecclesiastical organization left on the earth—until, finally, this false religious system which, in contradiction to the true Church (the "wife" and "bride" of the Lamb, already "caught up to be with him"), is called the "harlot" has become so morally and religiously corrupt that it is destroyed by the power of the antichrist and the ten kings whose favour and protection it had so long enjoyed (17:13-18).

The doctrine of the decline and apostasy of this false ecclesiastical system is in strict harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures as a whole as the following citations will show:

¹The Scripture references to the antichrist are as follows: 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10; Revelation 13:1-10; Daniel 2:40; 7:7, 8, 24, 25; 9:26, 27; 11:36, 37, etc. It will repay the student to look up these passages carefully. Both "beasts" in Revelation 13 have points in common with the antichrist, although the "first beast" (coming up out of the sea, which in the Scriptures represents the restless peoples and nations, cf. Rev. 17:15; 13:1; Isa. 57:20, 21).

“Let no man beguile you in any wise, for it (that is, the day of Christ) will not be except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God” (2 Thess. 2:3, 4).

“But the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies” (1 Tim. 4:1, 2).

“But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful . . . having a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof . . . men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith” (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

“I charge thee, in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word . . . for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

“Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find the faith on the earth” (Luke 18:8, R. V. margin).

Do we not see the seeds of such apostasy already existing in the Church? Do we not observe an antichristian spirit manifest among even men in the pulpit? They are existent in John’s day (1 John 2:18-26), but they were more honest and consistent than many false teachers nowadays. In John’s day “they went out from us,”

that is to say, they got out of the Church as soon as they ceased to believe the things for which the Church stood, being unwilling to pose as hypocrites; to-day they "stay within the Church" and inconsistently and hypocritically receive their compensation under false pretenses; denying the very faith which they vowed to uphold.

According to 1 John 2:22, 23, Unitarianism is anti-christian and is opposed to the true Christ of the Gospels. Yet look at the prevalence of Unitarianism among so-called Trinitarian preachers, orthodox and evangelical churches. Some years ago this Unitarian tendency within the Church was evidently strong enough to prevent the Trinitarians successfully protesting against the election of a United States President, who was a Unitarian. Just before leaving the White House this same President is reported to have said before a conference of Unitarians: "We are not large in numbers; people are not joining the Unitarian Church, and here is the reason: *they are getting what they want in orthodox churches*; (italics ours) they are with us but prefer to remain in their own denomination" (Wimberley).

A poem, recognized by a leading Eastern University as the prize poem, is here presented. It illustrates the spirit of the age in worshipping humanity instead of Christ:

"O holy spirit—O heart of man!
Will you not kindly listen, turn and bow
To that clear voice since time began,
Loud in your ears and louder now!
Mankind, the Christ retired,
Recrowned, recrucified,
No god for a gift God gave us,
Mankind alone must save us."

It has been pointed out vividly by another that one of

the signs of the decline of the Church is the struggle it has to exist in the present day. The increase in church giving has not been in proportion to the national increase of wealth. Church members are said to give one-sixth of one per cent. of their wealth, whereas the Bible calls for a tithe (one-tenth) of their total income. Tourists in one year, in the United States alone, are reported to have spent thirteen billion dollars for travel. We spent twenty-six million dollars for chewing gum. We gave sixteen million dollars only for missions. We spent more money for auto tires and Ouija boards than for all forms of Christian work in one recent year. Our Mission Boards have depleted treasuries and are compelled to close some mission fields, and see the work of Christ abroad seriously handicapped because of lack of funds.

The following statistics for one year recently are suggestive and certainly bear witness to an awful condition existing in the Church: One large association of preachers representing fifty thousand members lost nine hundred members in one year. Seven thousand churches reported that after one year's work not one member had been added to the membership roll even by letter, not to speak of additions on confession of faith. Six thousand was the loss enumerated by one evangelical denomination. Thousands of congregations in the United States are without a pastor. Ten million children in our country never enter a church or synagogue (Wimberley).

Again, note the absence of the real dynamic power of the revivals of Pentecost power of former days. That our people are resting in the form of religion rather than in the enjoyment of its power is beyond contradiction. Test an average revival by the Scriptures and see how far short it comes of emphasizing the prominent Biblical

doctrines, such as repentance, regeneration, restitution, etc. How few there are who come forward to the altar because of real sorrow for sin! Too often, instead of the personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour, it is a matter of coming forward to take the hand of the evangelist or to sign a card or to have one's name taken down, for what purpose we do not quite know.

The deterioration along spiritual and moral lines is seen by the dissolution of the sacred relationships of home. It is characteristic of the last time that its people shall be "without natural affection, truce breakers" (Rom. 1:31). Said a University Professor some time ago: "The home is doomed. It must give place to a more effective and coöperative system. Hotels and boarding-houses are taking the place of homes. In a small town there were twenty young married couples, all in good health, all boarding, and all without children."

Then, again, look at the lack of family religion in the home. No longer is the father acting as the divinely appointed priest of the family. The card table has taken the place of the family altar in too many homes.

Divorces are on the increase. It is claimed that there are over one million divorced people in the United States. More than seventy thousand people a year are divorced, and upwards of two hundred and fifty a (court) day. Can we imagine what such a condition will lead us to?

The moral forces of our country seem to have failed, and it is said that now legislation is sought to compel women to dress more modestly and decently. The white slave traffic is terrific.

Sabbath desecration is on the increase. The "continental Sabbath" of Europe, with its failure and unwillingness to recognize God, is upon us. We have evidences

every day as to the price Europe is paying for her "continental Sabbath." We know that the Jews as a nation were scattered throughout the world and became wanderers upon the earth because of their failure to keep the Sabbath. We may sneer at the "Blue Laws of New England" and the Puritans, and joke about these early settlers "falling first on their knees and then on the Aborigines," but it was on the sturdy Christian manhood of such pioneers that this great Republic was built. What kind of a republic shall we have in the future that is now being built very largely upon so many emigrants from certain parts of the old world, carrying with them absolutely no idea of the sacredness of the Sabbath, and practically no inspiring thought of God? Better by far the "Blue Laws of New England" than the godless ideals of those who have no regard for the things of God.

Thus the professing, apostate Church develops in its antichristian and immoral condition, until finally it is wiped out by antichrist and the kings that are in alliance with him (Rev. 17:16, 17).

4. IN RELATION TO THE JEW AND THE HOLY LAND.

(a) *The Seventieth Week Itself.*

(1) *Its General Description.* By the Seventieth Week we refer to the last of the seventy weeks referred to in Daniel 9:24-27: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the

Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

These weeks deal strictly with *Jewish time*, God's chosen people, the Holy City, and the Chosen Land. Even though "the times of the Gentiles" are still existent, God has not finished with the Jew. After "the times of the Gentiles" have been fulfilled, God will again deal with His chosen people (cf. Acts 15:13-18): "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." The indications on every hand are that there is a stirring among the Jews. Already "the fig tree" (which in the Scripture may be said

to represent the Jewish nation) is beginning "to bud" (Matt. 24:32-34). The Jew has his face set toward Palestine.

The Jews consider that the promises of their return to the Holy Land will be fulfilled as literally as the prophecies referring to their scattering among the nations of the earth have been fulfilled (cf. Jer. 23:3; Rom. 11; Isa. 43:5, 6; Zech. 2:4, 5; 8:3, 7, 8). They expect such a national restoration to their own land. For this purpose it seems to us they have been miraculously preserved. The words of Jesus, "*this generation* shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34) undoubtedly have a reference to the preservation of the Jewish nation (cf. Phil. 2:15). We have still with us, after all these centuries of preservation, the imperishable, ubiquitous, irrepressible Jew. Other nations have sinned, died and passed from the earth. The Jew, too, has sinned, but lives on and suffers, bearing the chastisement, not of an enemy but of a wayward son.

The Chosen Land is waiting for the Chosen People. Prosperity has never yet crowned the efforts of any other people in Palestine. No other nation has prospered in the Holy Land. The Jew has been the man without a country, and Palestine the country without the man, yet preserved for the man—the Jew. To-day the Jew seems to be coming into his own.

Just before the outbreak of the world war there were one hundred thousand Jews in Palestine, fifty thousand of them dwelling in and about Jerusalem. There were thirty or forty flourishing agricultural schools in Palestine. The towns of Safed, Tiberias and Hebron had already become industrial centres. Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, of Moses and the prophets, has

arisen from the dead, as it were, and is in daily use in Palestine. A world university had already been started in Jaffa by the Jews before the outbreak of this war, which the Jews claimed would be the seat of learning of the world. Fabulous wealth lies in the hands of Jews and Zionists to use in the rebuilding of Jerusalem, its wall and temple, as soon as Palestine shall again be given to the Jew, which is now in reality assured. Indeed, a representative commission of Jews has already been appointed to apportion out the Promised Land, the title of which is to belong to the Jew forever, and can never be sold. President Wilson appointed Henry Morgenthau, the American Jew, to represent the United States in looking after such an apportionment. For 1,900 years this hope has never died out of the hearts of faithful Jews.

Nor should it be overlooked that this stirring among the Jews with reference to the Holy Land is significant regarding the near approach of the "Kingdom of God." Our Lord Jesus gave us to understand that as soon as such an awakening was observed we might lift up our eyes for our redemption was close at hand. He said: "This generation (meaning the generation living at the time of this great Jewish awakening; not merely the generation He was speaking *to*, but also that one which He was speaking *about*—that generation) shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled." The generation that sees the fig tree begin to bud will also see its fruit—so quickly will the things pertaining to this particular period be consummated. "Behold I come quickly." "I will make a quick end." "Delay shall be no longer" (Rev. 10:6).

In general, this "week" may be divided into two parts of three and a half years each—"a time, times and half

a time" (cf. Dan. 9:27). The first half of the week is characterized by the acceptance of a false Messiah; the second half of the week by recognition of the deception, a turning away from the false Messiah and "the great tribulation" of the Chosen People.

Speaking more particularly of the events of the seventieth week, we should say that there is:

First. The return of the Jews in an unconverted state to their own land (Isa. 11:11; 60; Jer. 31:35-37; 33:19-26).

Current events show how easy it would be for these prophecies to be physically and literally fulfilled, as the story of Zionism, as told by the Rev. Samuel Schor, in *The Christian Workers' Magazine*, so vividly states: "The story of the origin of Zionism is well known, but there are certain developments of Zionism which deserve to be noticed.

"1. The spread of Zionism has been quite phenomenal of late. Nor does it owe its progress to the inspiration of a great leader like the late Dr. Herzl. While the present leaders are able men, not one of them possesses the magnetic personality of the late founder. And yet the numbers grow, and so does the enthusiasm. The hopefulness of the cause is itself the great motive power.

"2. This growing enthusiasm has increased to fever-heat when Turkey plunged into the war. They feel that by this act she as good as committed suicide. There will cease to be a Turkey when the war is over and Palestine can only be handed over to the Jews. Congresses, conferences, meetings are being held everywhere in all the great cities of the states, from New York to San Francisco, in the Argentine, in Holland and Switzerland.

"3. They had several years ago founded agricultural

colleges and model farms in Jaffa, on Mount Carmel, and other places, with the object of giving young Jewish would-be farmers the highest training in their work.

“4. The revival of Hebrew as a living tongue is a remarkable movement. It is being taught in the schools; children are encouraged to speak it at home; newspapers and books on every conceivable subject are printed in Hebrew; the literature of the world has been requisitioned from Milton and Dante to Dickens and the latest books on science and philosophy. As you travel through a Jewish colony you hear the children prattling in their play and using the language of Isaiah and the Psalms.

“5. Then, again, the Zionists are dreaming of a great world-university in Jerusalem. An attempt to materialize this dream had been made before the war broke out. Clever Jewish professors in various branches of science, mathematics and classics had been brought together. A college had been opened in Jaffa, where all the lectures were given in the Hebrew language. This college, after further development, was to have been transferred to Jerusalem and form the foundation of this world-university.

“6. Perhaps the strangest and saddest feature of this great Zionist movement is the utter absence of any thought of God or of spiritual blessings. The whole movement is national, but steeped in materialism of the grossest kind. They have their dreams of culture, of ethics, of morality, but they are all of a dead, cold type, reminding one of the heartless reasoning of the German professor. As the prophet foretold, Israel is returning in unbelief. When once in the land she will discover that the highest forms of organization, the best education, the most perfect system of man-made ethics, cannot

regenerate man, and then will come the 'time of Jacob's trouble' (Jer. 30:7), which will be the master surgeon's operation, painful but short, to remove forever the cancer of sin and unbelief."

For many years the average person has looked upon the Zionist Movement among the Jews as a fanatical dream. Even those persons outside the Jewish race, who have faith in prophecy, have not until now seen in the startling events of the age so many things indicative of the fulfillment of prophecy in the Second Coming of Christ and the restoration of Palestine to this long-exiled people.

With the Turks expelled from the Holy Land and the British in possession, there is a concerted awakening among the Jews, in anticipation of realizing their hope long deferred. For over 1,900 years this hope has been kept alive in the hearts of succeeding generations of Jews. It has suddenly been fanned into a flame of joyous expectancy by the suggestion that England might be influenced to relinquish any claim to the land and to assist in establishing a Jewish Republic, with Jerusalem as its centre.

There might be human ways in which this can be accomplished. It goes without saying that the Jews cannot flock to Palestine and each seize for himself a parcel of land and a house—though some of them undoubtedly have just such visionary ideas. The land, however, could be placed in the hands of a representative commission of Jews, with power to parcel it out. It would be a stupendous and almost hopeless task, but if God, in His wisdom, means that it shall be so, He will find a way, and it is not for us to speculate upon the difficulties of the achievement.

Ph. Spievacque, editor of the *Jewish Evangelist*, a Hebrew-Christian publication, published in Brooklyn, N. Y., says: "If there was ever a time during the history of the new dispensation when the great and awful prophecy of Habakkuk was nearing its fulfillment it is now. 'Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.'

"There was nothing imaginary in the mind of the prophet, but he was expressing the deep truths of God. There was nothing figurative about the entire prayer of Habakkuk, however strange it may appear, and the condition of famine everywhere does not need any interpretation, yet God's own people everywhere have at no other time so rejoiced in God, giving Him all the glory as they do now. Messiah is coming!

"Do you know that the Lord more than two thousand years ago gave, through the prophet Daniel, a clear description of the times in which we are now living?

"Do you know that this is the time whereto the Apostle Peter referred in Acts 3:19-21, where he calls it the times of restitution of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets?

"Do you know that Peter there declares that these times of blessing will not precede, but will follow, the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus?

"Do you know that the prophecies and signs which now herald the second advent of Christ are much more distinct than were those signs and prophecies which marked His first advent?"

The same publication publishes, also, an account of a lecture given by Dr. G. H. Enelow, rabbi of Temple Emanuel, the richest and most influential synagogue in New York City, on "The Significant Signs of the Times," in which he said:

"Jesus must mean more than something to the Jews, or we are out of joint with the religious progress of the world. It cannot be by mere accident that a Jew should have had such incalculable influence in the religious life of the human race. Whether Jesus was original or not; whether He is reported right or wrong, the fact of His influence for good and the fact that He was a Jew, cannot be ignored. Modern Jews cannot shut themselves in the silence of the centuries. It is high time for us to ask, and that most seriously, what do we think of Jesus? Be our answer to the question what it may, we ought to formulate an answer. The object of this lecture course is to make some contribution to those who want to make an intelligent answer to the question."

The Jews will rebuild the temple and restore worship. Jerusalem will again be the centre of the world's worship. Already, as we have seen, the Zionists are reviving the study of Hebrew as a living tongue and the Jews are dreaming of a great world-university in Jerusalem. Lectures are now being delivered in the Hebrew language in the college of Jaffa, and it is the purpose to transfer this college to Jerusalem and make it the nucleus of a world-university. Every Sabbath at sunset in the city of Jerusalem has been seen crowds of Jews, men and women, old and young, weeping, wailing and praying by the temple walls, beseeching Jehovah that He would again restore Jerusalem and the temple. This they have done for many centuries. One wonders if such a scene will now

be done away with, God having heard His people's cry!

The Jews will accept the false Messiah (Dan. 9:27; cf. John 5:43; 2 Thess. 2:1-12). This "wicked prince," "little horn," "man of sin," "the beast," who is accepted by the Jews as their Messiah, will deceive and delude the chosen people who have returned to Palestine, during the first half of the seventieth week. In the midst of that week (by "week" is meant a "week of years"—seven years)—probably because of their witnessing against "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, standing in the holy place" (cf. Matt. 24:15; Dan. 9:26-27)—the Jews will reject this mock messiah, who, in turn, will be so filled with anger that he will commence a persecution, the like of which had never been before, a persecution which is called in Scripture "the great tribulation," or "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Dan. 12:1; Jer. 30:7; Matt. 24:21, 29, 30).

(2) *The Relation of Antichrist to the False Prophet and Israel during this Seventieth Week.*

Naturally, on their return to Palestine, even though in an unconverted state, the Jews, being like the rest of mankind, only more so—incurably religious—will naturally, seeing they are again in their own land—a land so replete with religious memories pertaining to their race—turn their thoughts toward their coming Messiah and His kingdom. That men can practically disbelieve in God and yet go to the temple and worship is evident from the study of the first chapter of Isaiah, and also from the fact that many men to-day lie, cheat, and steal in business throughout the week, and yet go to church to worship God on Sunday.

Naturally, then, at this receptive time, many false Christs will arise and claim the allegiance and devotion of the people of God. Many will be rejected, but one of the "false Christs" will be chosen (Matt. 23:23, 24; John 5:36), probably because of some superior power he possesses, and which we know from Revelation 13:1-7 is given to him by antichrist.

The "false prophet" (Rev. 13:11-16; 16:13; 19:19, 20; 20:10; John 5:26) is represented as "the beast arising from the *land*" as contrasted with the antichrist, who is "the beast rising from the sea" ("land" indicating law and order, and in this instance "the" land—Palestine; and "sea," a symbol of anarchy, the restless nations). The "two horns" of the "false prophet" indicate harmlessness and weakness, yet he has the voice of the dragon. He is a wolf in sheep's clothing. So false prophets, "ministers of Satan," are thus described (2 Cor. 11:13-15). The "false prophet" is inspired by the beast and dragon even to the point of the miraculous. He is the instigator and controller of the religious and ecclesiastical system of that time even as the first beast is of the civil (and perhaps commercial) authority. Irenæus calls the false prophet "the armour-bearer" of the antichrist. He protects all who receive the mark of the antichrist and boycotts or slays all who do not render homage to the image of the beast—"the abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet, put up in "the holy place," and to which Jesus refers (Rev. 13:17; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14).

God's chosen people in Palestine, being small from a military point of view, will need the protection of some great political and military power against their enemies from the North and South. To secure such military aid,

the false prophet and the chosen people will enter into a covenant with the antichrist, who will render them both political and military aid in return, doubtless for the financial aid which they will be able to give him (Dan. 9:27).

The "two witnesses" (Rev. 11) will testify against such an alliance. Who these "two witnesses" are we may not be able definitely to say. They may be Enoch and Elijah, who have not yet tasted of death. Because of the peculiar nature of their miracles (walk up the heaven and turn water into blood) some think they will be Moses and Elias. At any rate, during the time of the false prophet, who is leading Israel away, these "two witnesses" testify, doubtless with some good results.

In the middle of the seventieth week, the false prophet will cause to be erected in the temple an image of the antichrist, and will call upon the Jews to fall down and worship it. This is the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel, the prophet, and also by our Lord Jesus (cf. Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15). Against such worship the "two witnesses" and the faithful remnant protest. This refusal angers the antichrist. As a result, the covenant which was confirmed at the beginning of the week is broken (Dan. 9:27) and the fierce anger of antichrist falls upon the chosen people in what is known as "The Great Tribulation" (Rev. 7:14; Matt. 24:21; Dan. 12:1, 7).

12. The Great Tribulation.

"The Great Tribulation" (see Oliver discourses, Matt. 24; Mark 13 and Luke 21; and perhaps Rev. 8:12) has to do with the Jew particularly (Dan. 12:1; Jer. 30:7). It has to do also, probably in a more limited sense, with the world (cf. Rev. 8:10), for its rebellion against God.

This great period of suffering may not be confined to Jerusalem or the Holy Land, but may also cover, in a limited way, other parts of the inhabited earth. It is poured out upon the rejectors of God and the neglectors of God too. "For the Lord cometh out of his holy temple to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The earth shall also disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isa. 26:21). There are only two ways of dealing with the sins of nations or of individuals: one is by repentance, the other by punishment.

Nations will be punished for their neglect of God, their rebellion against Him, and their refusal to obey His laws. God-defying, Sabbath-breaking peoples will surely be punished. A writer of the time of the Revolution tells us that "France stood up and blasphemed the name of God and His power and dared Him to send His thunderbolts and do His worst." And God did.

The "Tribulation" describes a period of suffering unsurpassed. Think of what these words mean: "Such as was not since there was a nation, no nor shall be" (Dan. 12:1). The suffering is to be greater than anything that has yet been seen. Think of the bloody carnage of the past and present, and then remember that all this is as nothing compared with "The Great Tribulation." When we think of what science and invention are doing for the destruction of human life, even to-day, we shudder for the things that are coming upon the race in the future.

"The fall and plunder of Carthage by the Romans with all its accompanying horrors; the siege of Jerusalem by Titus with its blood-curdling accounts of mothers eating their own children; the reign of terror in France when the guillotine was fed by the hour for months,

when suicides and murders turned Paris into a slaughter pen, and the River Seine actually ran with blood, and the children of murdered parents so enraged the officers that they herded them together and shot them like dogs; the Armenian massacres with their frightful atrocities, brutal murders, and indescribable tortures; the scenes around Warsaw, when half a million men were slaughtered in two weeks; the horror of the Northern soldiers in our Civil War in the fields of Shiloh, fighting their way down to the stream flowing between the armies, seeking water and finding blood instead; all these sufferings are to be surpassed by "The Great Tribulation." It is hard for us to conceive that anything worse could happen, but we have no doubt that it would not be hard to convince the Armenians and the Belgians that such things could occur. Hell will be opened to belch out its wickedness.

"Demons will be turned loose among men, swarming like locusts and stinging like scorpions. Men will seek death and not find it."

"Earth, what a sorrow lies before thee,
Unlike it in the shadows past,
The sharpest throes that ever tore thee,
Even though the briefest and the last!
I see the shadows of the sunset,
I see the dread avenger's form,
I see the Armageddon onset,
But I shall be above the storm.
There comes the mourning and the sighing,
There comes the heart tears' heavy fall,
The thousand agonies of dying—
But I shall be above them all."

Just what will be the duration of "The Tribulation" we may not be absolutely sure. The answer to the ques-

tion depends upon the interpretation we put on the "forty-five days." It has its course during the second half of the seventieth week. At any rate, we are assured by the Master that the time will be shortened, otherwise men could not bear it: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matt. 24:22).

Will the Church Go Through the Tribulation?

That "The Great Tribulation" refers to the experiences of the Jewish nation and does not at all concern the Church is clear, we think, from the following consideration:

(1) It is "the time of *Jacob's* trouble" (Dan. 12:1; Jer. 30:7), not the Church's trouble. All the signs which announce its advent and nature are Jewish; for example, "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, the prophet"; "let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains" (Luke 21:20); "pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath day" (Matt. 24:15-21).

It is the time of *Israel's* trouble for her rejection of the Messiah. Why should the true Church of Christ, the body and bride of the Lord Jesus, that loves Him, that has received Him as Lord and that longs to see His face, why should the true Church, we ask, with such a relationship to her Lord, so different from the attitude of the rejecting Jew, why should the true Church go through such trouble—trouble which is a punishment for the rejection of the Messiah? The Church may, and doubtless does, need punishment for her sins, but hath not God punished them in Christ, and hath He not "delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10)? Would God be "faithful and righteous" in relation to our pardon if He punished us also, as well as Christ who bore our sins

together with their guilt and punishment (1 John 1:9; 1 Pet. 2:24)? One can understand how Christendom, the professing Church, may be called upon to pass through such a fire, but it is difficult to see any reason why the true bride of Christ needs to.

According to Daniel (12:1), it is "thy people" that "shall be saved out of it" ("the great tribulation"). It is *Jacob* that is delivered out of his great trouble: "He (Jacob) shall be saved out of it."

There is no more reason why the Church should partake of the tribulation or Jacob's trouble than that they should partake of "the wrath of the Lamb." "The great tribulation" is of the nature of "judgments" and "wrath," neither of which the Church of Christ is subject to. Think you that Christ will allow His people to be subject to such suffering as that described in Revelation 16:3, 4, 9, 10, all of which is the result of sin? Is this to be endured by the believer, by the bride and wife of our Lord? No. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:8-9; Titus 2:13; Romans 5:9 declare that this is not to be. Christ will keep His Church from that hour of trial (Rev. 3:10; cf. 1 Thess. 5:9; Luke 21:34; 1 Thess. 5:3-6). The tribulation is justly characterized as "the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God." This clearly cannot be poured out upon the body and bride of Christ. Is the tribulation to be "a kind of purgatory for the bride of Christ? Is the righteousness of Jesus Christ with which the saints are clothed, and which is so perfect that even the law of Mount Sinai can find no fault therein, so imperfect that it must needs pass through a purgatory of fires?" What strange doctrine is this that would teach us that the Church must needs pass through the tribulation?

(2) Not one single Scripture anywhere teaches that the Church will go through the tribulation. No argument can be built on the silence of Scripture. As some one has well said, "Inference and application is not interpretation." Rightly interpreted, the Scripture nowhere teaches that the true Church, the body of Christ, must endure the tribulation.

(3) In the book of *Revelation*, the Church is seen in heaven from chapters 4 to 19. Not once in these chapters is the Church described as being on earth. In the Laodicean period (3:14-22), the false Church is spued out and the true Church is not only saved out of the great hour (3:10), but is feasting with Christ (3:20).

That the "twenty-four elders" (described in chapters 4 to 19) represent the Church is evident from their position, which is "co-enthronement" (3:21); from their number, which is the number of the Levitical priesthood (1 Chron. 24:1-19) and descriptive of the priesthood of believers (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5-9; Rev. 1:6; 5:9, 10); from the testimony of the Church, which is purely Christian (5:9, 10), and from the fact that the office of eldership is a representative office of the Church (Acts 15:2; 20:17).

The Church is seen in heaven before a seal is broken, a trumpet sounded, a vial poured out or a woe pronounced.

(4) Such an outlook as that of passing through "the tribulation" is never presented to the Church as its objective (cf. Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:17; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10). The Church is to look for "the Lord himself" from heaven. Just as He came the first time (to the temple and was seen by Simeon and Anna) before the predicted sign of the "forerunner" (which took place thirty years after He was seen by

Simeon and Anna), so will it be when Christ comes again. He will be seen by His Church long before He is seen by the world. Unto them that look, watch, and wait for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:28).

(5) Such a theory makes no place for the principal events connected with the future destiny of the Church, such as the rapture (1 Thess. 4:14-18); the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10); the presentation of the Church of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:1-9; Eph. 5:24-27; 2 Cor. 11:2), all of which belong to the "Day of Christ." All such events are not to be called "mere incidents in the downward sweep of the Lord in glory to the earth," as those who hold the post-tribulation theory maintain.

The Son of Man is said to come "immediately" after the tribulation (Matt. 24:29). What room is there, then, left for these events if the Son of Man comes "immediately" after the tribulation? If this position of the post-tribulation theory were true, why then were not the "shout," the "voice of the archangel," and the "trump of God" made signs of the coming of Christ to the earth instead of precursors of the "rapture" or the beginning "of the day of Christ"?

It is generally agreed that the saints—the Church, returns with Christ to reign with Him. Where and when, then, does she become joined to Him? Where and when did the "rapture," the "judgment seat of Christ," "the presentation," the "marriage supper of the Lamb" take place? The "downward sweep theory" is too meagre and trifling to account for these things. The saints come with Christ from heaven not from the air (cf. 19:11-14; 21:9-10).

(6) Those that come after the great tribulation are those converted by the preaching of "the gospel of the kingdom." They are tribulation saints. Three gospels are referred to in the New Testament; "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23), "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), and "the everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:6). (See Philip Mauro's most helpful book entitled, "Looking for the Saviour," to which the author is here greatly indebted for his presentation of this phase of the subject.)

(4) *The Truth about Armageddon.*

The "Great Tribulation," of which we have just been speaking, ends with what has been called "the battle of Armageddon" (R. V. Har-Magedon, Rev. 16:16).

The great world-conflict waged in 1914-1918 awakened an amazing interest in what is commonly termed "the battle of Armageddon." Naturally, a thing true in every such case, much wild speculation and rash interpretation crystallized itself about this famous and much talked of Scriptural battle. It may not be out of place at this time, therefore, to examine as closely as we can and discern as correctly as Scripture will permit, the real truth concerning the nature, place, extent and time of the Biblical "Armageddon."

The word "Armageddon" (Har-Magedon, R. V.) means "The Mountain of Megiddo." Strictly speaking, it is a question if there is any such place as "Har-Magedon" or "Armageddon" recorded in the Scriptures; consequently, the question arises, is there such an event as "the battle of Armageddon"? Of course, aside from the fact that there may be no such city, geographically, as "Armageddon," a closer look at the Scripture which refers to it (Rev. 16:13-16) reveals the fact that, after

all, the Bible does not speak of a battle taking place there, so much as its being a *gathering place* for a battle which, presumably, does not take place until the nineteenth chapter, verse nineteen, in which we have portrayed for us the coming of Christ with the heavenly host for this great conflict (19:11-21). This phase of the subject should be clearly borne in mind in studying "Armageddon."

Mention is made in the Scripture of a place called "Megiddo" (Judg. 5:19; 1 Kings 9:15; 2 Kings 23:29; 2 Chron. 35:22), which is situated, geographically, near by or on the Plain of Esdraelon. It has been well called "the battlefield of the world," for many of the greatest battles of the world have been fought there—Barak, Joshua, Gideon, Josiah, Judas Maccabæus, the Turks, the Saracens and Napoleon have waged decisive conflicts in that region. And perhaps it is not too much to say that the decisive battles of the late world-conflict were fought out there.

The word "megiddo" means, literally, "a troop," "to cut through," "to slaughter." It indicates "a place of decision," and is almost always, indeed one might say always, concerned with a conflict between heathen or apostate nations and the chosen people of God. It is therefore a *religious* war. The word "Armageddon" should never be used to describe a conflict of any other nature.

But "Megiddo" stands for a *spirit* or *principle* as well as for a place. It has a moral significance as well as a geographical location. This is most important to understand. It is doubtless for this reason that the reference in Revelation (a book which itself is full of symbolic and figurative language) to "Megiddo" is prefaced with the

symbolic and figurative expression: "*a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.*" Why this symbolic expression if something more than a mere geographical location is not thus indicated? Indeed, may we not go as far as to say that this explanatory phrase at least intimates that the *principle* for which this place stands is of as much, if not of even far greater, importance, in this connection, than its geographical location on the map? Most assuredly the moral aspect of "Armageddon" is more prominent in this reference than its geography, otherwise, so it seems to us, the words, "as it is called in the Hebrew tongue" would be superfluous and meaningless.

It is for this reason, doubtless, that the word "Megiddo" has placed before it, in the Hebrew, an affix (such as "Har-Magedon," meaning "Mountain of Megiddo," Rev. 16:16, R. V.) which is determined by the nature of the transaction which takes place there. If, for example, it is *sorrow* or *humiliation* which gathers the people there, then the place is referred to as "the *waters* of Megiddo" (Judg. 5:19), or "the *valley* of Megiddo" (2 Chron. 35:22); if it is *pride* which gathers the forces there, then it is "*mountain* of Megiddo"—"Har" meaning "*mountain*" and standing in the Scriptures for the lofty pride of man.¹ Certain it is that *haughtiness* and *lofty pride* is the spirit in which these "kings of the whole earth" gather themselves together against the Son of Man and His heavenly hosts.

It becomes clear then, from what has been said, that

¹The best authorities give "Har-Magedon"—mountain of Megiddo; so Revised Version Revelation 16:16, rather than "Armageddon"—city or town of Megiddo, although "Ar" also means "mountain" as well as "city."

there can be no true understanding of what is meant by the expression "the battle of Armageddon" unless it is considered not only as a *place* but also, yea and very much more, as a *principle*.

5. THE MILLENNIUM.

(a) *Character of the Millennial Age.*

The thousand year reign is characterized as the long expected days of Messiah, the days of righteousness and peace, when Jerusalem, rebuilt and adorned, will be the throne of Jehovah and the centre of universal law and rule, worship and blessing.

"The heavens will be cleared of demoniacal powers of the air, which rain plagues and woes upon men, the Spirit shall be poured out from on high upon men, the wilderness shall become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. In lands once devastated by flood and fire, in desolate wilderness of heat and cold, the earth shall give her increase. The inhabitants of the land shall not say, 'I am sick.' Sin will be suppressed; human life lengthened; death, a punitive exception. Whatever might array itself against the Messiah shall be at once subdued, and at the end, when there is neither adversary nor evil concurrent, he shall deliver up the kingdom of God, even the Father, that God may be all in all" (1 Kings 5: 4; 1 Cor. 15: 20-25; Isa. 2: 104; 33: 24; 60: 65; Rev. 20).

The Jews, as a nation, will be converted (Rom. 11) and become the great missionaries of the world (Zech. 8: 13-23; Acts 15: 14-17). If they manifest the same thrift and organization in missionary activity that they now do in business, what a blessing they will be to the world!

Christ will be King. The government of the Millen-

nial Age will be a theocracy, an absolute monarchy (Jer. 23:5-8; Luke 1:30-33). The apostles will reign with Christ over the Jews (Matt. 19:28) and the Church over Gentile nations (Luke 19:11-19; Heb. 2:6, 7). Not democracy, but absolute monarchy (theocracy) will be the final form of government for the world.

It shall be a reign of righteousness and peace (Isa. 2:4; 32:17; Luke 2:14). Peace will then prevail (Isa. 2), for the peace of God will possess the hearts of His people (cf. Col. 3:13). There will be no war then. Joel 3:10 gives the condition of things *now*: "Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong." Isaiah 2:4 gives us the condition of things *then*: "And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." We shall have no West Point and no Annapolis.

Jerusalem will be the capital city. From Jerusalem shall go forth the law. Pilgrimages will be made from all over the earth to Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16). Two men shall take hold of the skirt of a Jew and say, "We will go with thee to Jerusalem."

There will be a renovated earth. What a magnificent picture we have in the early chapters of Genesis as we behold Eden as God created it! So will it be in some future day. The earth as God created it is a fruitful matrix travailing to bring forth, but sin has cursed it. Briers, thorns and thistles does it bring forth. All this will be removed during the Millennium (Isa. 35:1, 2; 66:17-25).

A renovated earth (Gen. 3:17-19; cf. Isa. 65:17-25;

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35; Rom. 8:19-21)! Sorrow will be eliminated from among the people of God. There will be no prematurely early deaths. The earth shall yield her increase. Men shall rest securely in their houses. There will be unlimited communion with God. Even the animal creation will be subject to man (cf. Isa. 11:6-9; Ezek. 34:25; Hosea 2:18). How remarkable is the statement of the temptation of Christ as found in Mark 1:13, where we are told that Jesus "was with the wild beasts." So was Adam before his fall (Gen. 2:19), and yet neither Adam nor Jesus had any fear. The fear of animals in man is the result of the entrance of sin into the heart. It is remarkable to note in this connection that, while the animal creation is changed and tamed, yet the curse pronounced upon the serpent remains for "dust shall be the serpent's food" (cf. Isa. 65:25; Gen. 3:14). What a glorious portrayal of the renovated earth we have described in Isaiah 11, 35 and 65! Is it any wonder that the saints of God cry out, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly"? Surely these will be the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19), "the time of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21), and the days of "the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 19:28).

There will be a prolongation of life. A man dying one hundred years old will be considered an infant. Think of what such longevity would mean to men like Shakespeare, Edison, and other such celebrities! They would then have time to carry to full fruition the products of their genius. Who can tell what will then happen?

There will be no death during the Millennium, except for gross sinners, who apparently will be punished with

instant death. Nor will there be any sorrow, sickness, or death among the people of God; no doctor, no undertaker, no hearse, no grave. There will be security in all the saints dwelling in that day. Nothing shall make the people of God afraid.

Satan will be "bound" during the Millennium, and by that is meant that his power will be limited and hindered. He will not have the sway over the hearts and lives of men that he has now. This is what the "binding of Satan" doubtless means (Rev. 20:1-7). The wicked spirits in heavenly places (Eph. 6:12-17) will be cast down. This does not mean that sin will be entirely abolished during the Millennium, for the hearts of men are so sinful that, even without the incitement and instigation of a personal devil, their sinful and depraved natures will lead them to wrong-doing (cf. Rev. 9:20, 21; 16:9-11). It is for this reason that we have an account of another battle by the hosts of Satan against the hosts of God even after the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-9).

(b) *The Close of the Millennium*—Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-10).

Apostasy and rebellion is recorded as closing the one thousand years' reign of our Lord upon the earth. One would have thought that, after such a glorious reign, men would have come to see that righteousness is a blessing and sin is a curse, but so steeped are men in sin that even amid "the great tribulation" (Rev. 9:20; 16:10-11) and the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-10) sin again manifests itself. In this connection, compare Ezekiel, chapters 38-39—Gog and Magog.

6. THE LAST THINGS.

(a) *The Battle of Gog and Magog* (Rev. 20:7-10).

Not much is said relating to the events that take place immediately following the Millennium. This much is recorded, however, that Satan is loosed for a little while and permitted to have some access to and power over mankind. Sin, during the reign of Christ for one thousand years on the earth, has been curbed; it has not been annihilated. What sin does remain Satan takes, works upon, fans into a flame and thus gathers together a great army to fight against the Lord God of Hosts. This last conflict is called the battle of Gog and Magog.

Just who are signified by "Gog and Magog" it may be difficult to determine. Some have thought that the reference is to the same powers mentioned in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39. There are serious difficulties, however, in the way of accepting this theory. Gog and Magog of Ezekiel are before the Millennium; Gog and Magog of Revelation, after it. John makes no geographical boundaries for these people as Ezekiel does. The *end* of these foes of God is not the same in both instances; in one case their carcasses lie in the street, in the other they seem to be instantly consumed with fire; the one is buried, the other burned. According to Ezekiel these people arise before the establishment of the full millennial glory of Zion and Jerusalem; according to John, it is afterward. Nor are the leaders of these alien hosts the same in Ezekiel and John.

Whether "chief prince" should be translated "prince of Rosh" and thus, in harmony with the two proper nouns—Meshech and Tobol—which follow, be made to refer to Russia is something probably impossible to settle decisively. The same may be said as to "Gomer" referring to Germany. This much, we think, may be clearly and unmistakably decided: that inasmuch as Gog

and Magog in Ezekiel were the great (and probably the last) enemies of God's Chosen People and Land, so the hordes of Gog and Magog in Revelation symbolize the last great enemies of the Chosen People and Land of God. Certainly in both instances the conflict is between these hordes and the Chosen People and Land. Probably Gog and Magog in Revelation refer to the barbarian hordes just as Har-Magedon refers to the civilized armies that array themselves against the Lord, His Anointed, and His people. Whoever these last enemies are they are finally defeated.

(b) *The close of the Millennium is characterized by the execution of final doom and destiny upon Satan* (20:10; cf. Matt. 25:41).

This is the record of the final doom of the adversary of men. At last he is cast into the abyss where the beast and false prophet are (Rev. 19:20), there to remain forever, and never again to lead the sons of men astray. Thus Satan meets his doom.

(c) *There is then the Great White Throne Judgment* (Rev. 20:11-15).

This is the final judgment—that of the impenitently wicked and takes place at the close of the Millennium. It is a judgment of “the dead”; no mention is made of the living in connection therewith. Note the difference between the judgment of the “living nations” and that of “the great white throne”; the former is at the beginning, the latter at the close of the Millennium; one deals with the living, the other with the dead; one deals with conduct toward “the brethren,” the other with general sins recorded in books.

It has been thought that the judgment of fallen angels (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4) takes place at the close of the

Millennium. In this judgment believers are associated with Christ (1 Cor. 6:3).

(d) *The New Heavens and the New Earth.*

A New Sphere of Life for the Saints. A new heaven and a new earth! Paradise regained. A new spiritual environment and new physical conditions. The redeemed will not then be surrounded by the temptations and defeats of this mortal life. There shall be "no more sea." To the Jew the sea was a symbol of unmixed peril, trouble and restlessness (cf. Isa. 57:19-21).

A New Home for the Saints. Revelation 21-22:5 portrays a picture of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which is to be the final and eternal abode of the people of God.

Within the "new heavens" and on the "new earth" is the Holy City. Note some characteristics of the Holy City:

Its *Name*: New Jerusalem—what music to the ear of the Jew, who for so long had been without a city of his own!

Its *Walls* (21:17): High, secure, safe against all assaults.

Its *Gates* (21:15, 21): Guarded by angels; names on gates; only saints enter.

Its *Foundations* (v. 14): The apostles of the Lamb; lustrous (18).

Its *Citizens*: of the nations that are saved; characteristics (21:6, 7; 22:14, R. V.; contrast with 21:8, 27).

Its *Magnitude*: 4,800 stadia (the earthly Jerusalem being but 33 stadia).

Its *Glory* (11:23): what costliness!

New Conditions of Life for the Redeemed. God's home is there (21:3); thus, the believer had uninterrupted

communion with God. Things that used to be have all passed away; death, mourning, curse, tears, sorrow, night—all have gone. New created things appear: the river of life, the tree of life, new services, new relationships, new light (22:4).

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

“And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying Amen: alleluia.

“And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

“Oh, think of the home over there,
By the side of the river of light,
Where the saints all immortal and fair,
Are robed in their garments of white.

“Oh, think of the friends over there,
Who before us the journey have trod;
Of the songs that they breathe on the air,
In their home in the palace of God.

“I’ll soon be at home over there,
For the end of my journey I see.
Many dear to my heart over there,
Are watching and waiting for me.”

V

THE TIME OF CHRIST'S COMING

THE greatest care is needed in the consideration of this phase of the subject. Both post- and premillennialists need to be cautious, careful and forbearing the one with the other. There has been too much abuse and unChristian sentiment in the treatment of those holding opposing sides on this subject.

1. CAUTION AGAINST EXTRAVAGANCE.

To fix a definite date for Christ's Coming and say that He WILL or WILL NOT come at that time is to be guilty of a most serious blunder. No man can say when Christ will or will not come. Jesus Himself said, "No man knoweth the day or the hour," and "ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Indeed, some "modernists" have gone so far as to say that our Lord Himself professed ignorance as to the time of future events, and especially of this one in particular: "No man . . . not even the Son of Man knoweth." It therefore follows, they say, that none of His Apostles nor subsequent theologians can prognosticate. It is true, that this particular phase of His Coming Again was, during the time of His humiliation, not revealed to Him by the Father, and so, of this one particular He was "willingly ignorant," and was very willing to remain so until the Father saw fit to reveal it to Him. Jesus never uttered one

word which the Father had not put into His mouth. He did not "voice the current opinions of the day," nor did He "but give expression to the belief of the Jews about him"; He was not "a man of the hour" in the sense that He was subject to the false beliefs prevalent round about Him. In commenting on His own testimony, Jesus said, "For I spake not from myself; but the Father that hath sent me, he hath given me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak . . . the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:49, 50). It is evident therefore that in Mark 13:32, in which passage Jesus professed not to know the day nor the hour of His Coming, He was conscious that He was dealing with a phase of a subject on which the Father had not given Him specific light; it was a point and one of those things "which the Father had kept in his own privilege or authority" (Acts 1:7), and apparently was not a necessary part of the knowledge requisite for the carrying out of the divine program.

The fact that Jesus gave voice only to those things on which the Father had given Him knowledge made His spoken words all the more authoritative and final. Not one word fell from His sacred lips that was not in deed and in truth the very word of the Father. The "silences" of Jesus, therefore, made His utterances infallible. What He did say was final and infallible. We should have a poor and unreliable foundation, indeed, did our faith rest only upon "the current opinions of the time of Jesus" and "the notions of the hour in which he lived." That Jesus did actually know the future is evident from the things He foretells in the very chapter in which the words seem to imply "a limitation

of knowledge." We find Jesus here predicting and portraying events that were to happen many centuries ahead, such as what would happen to Jerusalem, the scattering of the Jews among the nations of the earth, and the things that would happen to the world at large.

Dangers from "Date-fixing" and "Almanac-making"

We need to beware of two dangers in considering the time of the Coming Again of the Lord Jesus: one is that we may make too much of the time element, and the other that we make too little of it.

That "dates" have *some* place in the calculation of "times and seasons" the book of Daniel shows conclusively. No symbolic interpretation of Daniel can satisfactorily account for the reality and order of the facts occurring as recorded in that book. The modern destructive critic would, of course, account for the accuracy of Daniel's dates by putting the authorship of the book down to about 150 B. C. instead of where we believe it should be put—in the time of Daniel himself: between 600 and 550 B. C. It is clear from the study of Daniel that the prophet had figured out some dates as to the time the captivity should end; this he had gathered from his study of the prophecy of Jeremiah. We may call *Daniel* a "book of visions" and spiritualize away its contents as best we can, but when you have done that it is impossible to get away from the fact that there is in the book a historical and chronological order of kingdoms and events described with unerring accuracy.

One may say the same thing about the book of Revelation. It too may be looked upon by some as "a book of visions," written sometime during the reign of Nero or Domitian to comfort the Christians who were en-

during the bitter persecutions under these two inhuman emperors. But after you have said that, how are you going to account for the accuracy with which the order of events find their narration? Surely **not on the basis of any "visionary hypothesis."**

Perhaps we could say that both Anna and Simeon, as they were "looking for the consolation of Israel" and the Saviour of the world, had some consciousness of the nearness of the time of the First Coming of Christ. It had been revealed to Simeon that "he should not taste of death until he had seen the Lord's Christ." Perhaps, as the "wise men" they had some basis of calculating times and seasons.

That Christ Himself recognized such periods as "times and seasons" (Acts 1:7), "the end of the age" (Matt. 14:39), "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), "that day and that hour" (Matt. 24:36), there surely can be no question.

So it would be unwise of us to pay absolutely no attention to periods, "times and seasons," and such other periods of time on which the Word of God lays emphasis and to which our attention is drawn therein. Further, Jesus distinctly exhorts His followers not to ignore certain events and "signs" which are to be regarded as harbingers of His near approach: "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads for he is nigh, even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33). Indeed Jesus rebukes the people for being unable to read the signs of the times, even as they prided themselves on being weather prophets (Matt. 16:1-4). The predictive element in the Bible must not be neglected or despised even when it undertakes to enlighten the devout student with regard to future impending events.

“*Second-Sight*”

We do not ignore what we know as “second-sight” as we meet it in certain people. Note the following:

“CHRIST IS COMING—A FACT!!”

(Culled from “*The Daily News*,” Feb. 4th, 1919—
Abbreviated)

It is a Fact, that the Bible contains prophecies that the Jews should be driven from Palestine—remain for a long time without a king, yet never come to a full end. This land was to remain desolate for many generations, until . . . (Deut. 28 and 29; Jer. 30:10–11; Hos. 3:4; Lev. 26).

It is a Fact, that these predictions have been literally fulfilled, thus establishing their superhuman origin.

It is a Fact, *that from the seventeenth century students of Biblical prophecy have been able to foresee most unlikely events* which should indicate the near Advent of Christ. Included among such signs may be mentioned the ending of the temporal power of the Papacy, the drying up of the Turkish power, the first stages of Israel’s restoration to Palestine, and concurrently therewith “a horrible and unheard-of preparation for War.”

It is a Fact, that these anticipations have been fulfilled!

It is a Fact, that in 1850 Dr. J. Thomas published a book . . . in which . . . he showed that, in the restoration of Israel to their land, they would return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and that Britain would act as a protecting Power, acquiring predominance in Palestine, and promoting its colonization by Jews.

It is a Fact, that since 1860 there has been considerable development in Palestine; at the outbreak of war between fifty and sixty Jewish colonies had been established in the Land.

It is a Fact, that in November, 1917, Mr. Balfour—Foreign Minister—wrote a letter, intimating that the

British Government "view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object."

It is a Fact, that in Dr. J. Thomas' book, he declared on the basis of Isaiah 43 that Britain, the protecting Power, would be in charge over Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba.

It is a Fact, that Britain went to Egypt in 1882, and that ancient Ethiopia and Seba correspond to territory added to Egypt by Lord Kitchener. . . .

It is contended, that these signs, coupled with world-wide unrest, indicate the speedy Return of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God, and institute a time of profound and universal peace.

"What God does not rule, He can overrule."

A book written by the late Dr. Samuel Bagster, of the *Christian Herald*, London, England, sometime about 1866, which describes with quite substantial accuracy events connected with the World War of 1914-1918, created an exceedingly great amount of interest. So also a volume from the pen of the late Dr. Grattan Guinness, of London, written some forty years ago, and in which he says "that Christians living in 1917 would witness a crisis in connection with the restoration of Jerusalem." Was it not in December, 1917, that General Allenby captured the holy city of Jerusalem?

It is said that when Henry the Second of England visited Jerusalem, there were given to him the keys of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre until the time should come when the British should liberate Jerusalem from the hands of its enemies, the Turk. And was it not Britain that actually liberated Jerusalem and that to-day holds the mandate over the holy land?

We do not altogether pass over such things. We at

least "stop, look, and listen." Our curiosity is aroused to say the least. Shall we pass over lightly and without any thought then what the Word of God has to say with reference to certain great future events? And yet we must not for one moment forget in this connection that we are dealing with events, not dates. No so-called "Historical" method of Bible study should be permitted to rob us of the "Predictive" element in the Scriptures. Nor should we overlook the fact that our Lord promised His disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit and that He would "show them the things to come." Further, God has distinctly promised to reveal future things unto His children (Amos 3:7). Was not the revelation regarding the glorious events connected with Christ's coming for His saints, by "the Word of the Lord"?

There are really two great schools of thought in connection with the consideration of the time of Christ's Coming: the premillennialist, holding to the belief that there can be no Millennium until the Christ comes to reign as King on the earth; and the postmillennialist, maintaining that it is the duty of the Church through its spiritual agencies to usher in the Millennium and then, and not until then, will Christ come.¹

¹Of course there is a division among the premillennialists as to just when Christ will come, and while all are agreed that He must come before there can be a Millennium, some among them believe that the Coming is not "imminent," that is it cannot take place at "any moment," but that the Church must go either part way or all the way through "the great tribulation" ere Christ descends from heaven for His Church. Perhaps this difference of opinion comes from the amount of time devoted by the premillennialists to the general subject, for without unfairness to the postmillennialists it may be said that a far greater amount of time is devoted to the subject and to books written about it than is characteristic of the postmillennial side.

2. COULD CHRIST REALLY COME TO-DAY?

The answer to this question depends upon just how the Coming of Christ is defined, and from what viewpoint it is considered. There are said to be two stages in the Coming: first, Christ's Coming FOR the Church; secondly, His Coming WITH the Church. According, even to premillennialists, Christ could not come to-day, if by that Coming is meant the setting up of His Millennial Reign upon the earth, for there are many signs yet to be fulfilled before that event can transpire. There are many premillennialists, however—perhaps the overwhelming majority of them—who maintain that Christ could come at “any moment” to take away His Church.

Perhaps it would not be out of place just at this point to briefly outline what, according to the premillennialist, is the program of the Coming—only in a general way of course, for it is not maintained for a single moment that God has revealed the details of His program but just the great, broad outlines, that is all. This then is the suggested order:

And let us not forget in this connection that the Second Coming of Christ is not—as a prominent post-millennial writer said some time ago, and by the way he should have known better—“a nitroglycerine explosion,” “a flash in the pan crisis,” “and then the world ends, and all is over.” These are the ideas conveyed, if not perhaps the exact words. Now the Second Coming of Christ is not such a crisis, a dot, a flash, an explosion, and then all is over. It is, in one sense, a crisis, but it is a crisis with a view to a process; it is the beginning of a long program that may cover many, many centuries, even one event in it covering a thousand years. Here are the items of the general outline program: the raising of

the righteous dead; changing of the righteous living; rapture of both to meet the Lord in the clouds to be forever with the Lord; then perhaps the Judgment Seat of Christ at which the saints receive their reward, and some think the Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place here, although others put this event until the Coming of Christ with His saints; then—how soon after the rapture no one perhaps knows—begins the seventieth week of Daniel, a period of time which has to do with the chosen people of God while in their own land; the Great Tribulation at the close of which Christ comes with His saints to deliver His chosen people from their enemies, and at which time the battle of Har-Magedon and the Judgment of the Living Nations for their treatment of the Jews (Matt. 25) will take place; the Millennial Reign of Christ is then set up on the earth, during which time Satan is bound; at the close of the Millennium Satan is loosed, there is a final revolt of the forces of evil (Gog and Magog) under the leadership of Satan, their ultimate and final defeat; then the Great White Throne Judgment at which time the wicked dead are raised and judged; then, and finally, comes the “new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” This, in brief and broad outline, is what is comprehended in what the premillennialist speaks of as “The Second Coming of Christ.” And for the understanding of his position regarding this doctrine, this outline must be kept in mind, so that when certain passages of Scripture dealing with the Coming of Christ are quoted, they may be put in their proper place and under their proper heading, thus avoiding confusion.

Because there are good and holy and scholarly men on both sides of this question it should be possible to discuss

this doctrine, and even to differ about some of its details, without any bitterness of spirit. But, alas! we are afraid these differences at times cause feeling bordering on hatred. The personal element should be eliminated. The evidence for the doctrine contended for is outside of man anyway; it is objective, not subjective; Scripture is the final arbiter. And we should not forget that the glory of Protestantism is that the individual Christian conscience enlightened by the Holy Ghost is the final judge as between man and man. This is what Luther contended for, and it is that principle for which we must still protest. To resort to abuse on either side is not only unchristian; it is cowardly. Abuse is the weapon of cowards; it is resorted to only when argument has failed. A true, noble man never resorts to it. Denunciation is not information, nor is destruction instruction. We should approach the subject with an unbiased and unprejudiced mind. No one man is big enough to have the only conception of all the truth. Truths and facts are stubborn things, but they are comparatively easy to overcome as compared with prejudices. This is well illustrated in the disputes between labour and capital: the facts are easy to get at, but the prejudices of men are almost impossible to overcome. In Christianity it ought not to be so; in true Christianity it will not be so. Let us then be truly Christian.

At a recent Conference held in California, a bishop, addressing the ministers in his diocese, told them "that he had full authority over the Sunday schools within his diocese, and that if they had a teacher who believed in and taught the Premillennial Coming of Christ, he should be put out of the Sunday school." Can you conceive of a tyranny more "popish" than that? Why, that

would exclude the founder of the denomination to which the bishop belonged, for he was a premillennialist. Since when has any man or bishop been crowned "pope" in Protestantism? Never, and we trust God it never will be. The Church of Christ should rise up and rid herself of such "czarism," and oligarchy. It is an attempt at religious despotism, and will not be tolerated in any denomination long.

Another bishop, addressing a conference of ministers in Newark, New Jersey, warned them against being carried away with "these currents of ephemeral thought," and with "ideas that are easily absorbed or wrought out without the utmost deliberation." He then went on to illustrate what he meant, and said, "When you deal, for instance, with the Second Coming of Christ, and take it out of its proper setting, and so magnify it as to make it a school of religion, you are dealing unfairly with the book of the Master. You do it at the cost of results that are fundamental to the welfare of the people." With the latter part of this quotation we are in sympathy, but to refer to premillennialism as "a current of ephemeral thought" and as "an idea" without "thought" and "deliberation," then we maintain it is time to protest for such a charge can be laid against postmillennialism equally and perhaps more so than against premillennialism—that is if we grant the charge to be true in either case. Such a statement as these bishops made is a direct insult to the godly, scholarly and devout men of the Church of Christ throughout all the Christian centuries who have held to the premillennial view of the Coming of Christ. Well would it be for those bishops to pay attention to the propagation of the false and pernicious doctrine that is being preached in pulpits of their own

dioceses, for as one has well said, "Doctrines and movements draining both the strength and rolls of the churches are often passed by in silence, whereas they are often bitterly and openly assailed who rejoice in "the blessed hope—the personal return of the Lord from heaven."—Haven.

(a) *The Premillennial Position.*

The premillennialist holds to his particular view regarding the Coming Again of Christ for the following reasons:

(1) First, he maintains that it is according to the teaching of the New Testament.

According to this view, it is held that the Scriptures of the New Testament, if rightly interpreted, compel that one view the Coming of Christ as taking place before there can be a Millennium, and that this was the belief and teaching of the Apostles.

That the New Testament Christians really believed in the imminent Coming of Christ there can be no doubt. Even the most ardent opponents of premillennialism admit this. Dr. Shaler Matthews, Dean of the Divinity School of Chicago, and a man who is totally out of sympathy with the doctrine of the Second Coming from the Pre's point of view, acknowledges that "the early Christians believed that Jesus would return during the lifetime of their generation," and that "*this hope is on every page of the New Testament*" (Italics ours). Dr. Brighton of Boston University admitted that "premillennialists were right if verbal inspiration is right." Dr. Shannon, in commenting on the position of a fellow pastor said that "if the Bible were correct, then the brother was correct in his premillennial views," but that he "did not believe that the Bible was correct." Even

Dr. Snowden, who has written one of the strongest books on the postmillennial view of the Coming of Christ, declares that "the Second Coming of Christ is the sunrise hope of the New Testament." He continues, "This blessed hope of His return overreaches the lengthening day in which we live and work, and is the golden link which binds His first and His second coming. This is that 'blessed hope' which has been cherished through all the Christian centuries and which gives final value to the reign of Christ and the kingdom of God."¹

One whose writings bitterly assail the premillennial position is compelled to admit this Scriptural evidence enough to say, "Nearly every New Testament writer looks for the return of the Lord to establish His kingdom in undisputed and universal sway. Of this there can be no doubt. That the early Christians did in one way or another believe in a coming reign of Christ upon the earth is a simple fact of history. This fact must be accepted as such, however it is explained. It cannot be explained away. Intellectual honesty forbids us to take refuge in a process of spiritualizing those passages which record that hope. These passages meant what they said. The grounds for this expectation provide matter for inquiry, but the fact of the expectation must be admitted by all."—Moore.

This is sufficient evidence and testimony, even from the opposing side, to show that such a belief as the premillennialists hold is in accord with the statements of the New Testament, "our enemies themselves being the judges" and witnesses. Of course, the reliability and dependability of the New Testament are questioned by these writers. They claim that while the apostles taught

¹"The Coming of the Lord," by Haven, p. 4.

and the early Christians believed in such a view of the Coming of Christ, they were in error and mistaken, and "their mistakes had to be admitted bravely."

From all this it should seem clear that the issue after all is whether the New Testament is a dependable revelation. It is admitted that the Scriptures teach the premillennial view of Christ's return, but can we believe what the Scriptures say? Those holding the premillennial position, almost to a man, indeed we recall no exception, maintain their faith in the absolute integrity and authority of the Scriptures, while the postmillennialist, must, logically, holding that the New Testament teaches premillennialism, hold that the Scriptures are not a final and authoritative revelation.¹

So another postmillennial writer has put the matter this way: The only question before the world in this matter is this: "Is the Bible the inerrant Word of God, or is it simply a record of spiritual experience and thought, reflecting the religious knowledge and institutions of the ages in which the several parts were written? If you believe it is the inerrant Word of God, then you belong to the Second Coming." It was Dr. George Ellis, a leading spirit among the Unitarians, who said that "the Trinitarians were right providing that their views of the inspiration of the Scriptures were admitted." A candid confession to make, surely.

From all this I think it will be apparent to sober thought that after all it is not so much a doctrine that premillennialists are contending for, but the dependabil-

¹ One would not like to charge this position regarding the reliability of the Scriptures upon all those who do not hold the premillennial position. If, however, one maintains that the New Testament does teach it and yet he denies it, how can such a position be defined?

ity and authority of the Bible as the supreme and final revelation of the mind and will of God for man.

(2) *The words of Jesus to the Apostle John* (John 21: 21, 22).

In verses eighteen to twenty Jesus had told Peter how he (Peter) should die. Peter is inquisitive as to what would happen to John whom he sees approaching. Jesus answers Peter's inquiry, "And what shall this man (John) do?" with the words: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." "This saying therefore went abroad among the disciples, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

Premillennialists maintain that it is fair to believe that John, and the other disciples, were fully justified in believing that it was *possible* for Jesus to return during the lifetime of the Apostle John. It may have been that this was one of the sayings of inspired writ which gave the early Christians basis for their hope of the imminent Coming of the Lord. That the words "Till I come," cannot refer to "death," the "destruction of Jerusalem," or "the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost" is clear from the arguments presented on pages 69-73 of this book. The words to Peter make the words to John mean just the opposite of death, and these words were written long after Pentecost and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

The Case of Peter and Paul

An objection has been raised, however, to these verses teaching the imminency of Christ's coming because Peter's death is distinctly foretold, even to its manner,

therefore Christ could not come during the lifetime of Peter. It is unquestionably true that, according to this interpretation of Christ's words—and we think it is fair—Christ could not come during Peter's lifetime. But we should not forget that Peter could have died at "any moment." Those were perilous days in which the apostle was living. Herod had stretched out his hand and killed James in a day; he could do the same with Peter, indeed he intended to, and would have done so, for he had already put Peter into prison for that purpose, had not the Lord supernaturally interfered (Acts 12:1-25). The apostles, indeed all Christians, in those days "stood in jeopardy every *hour*"; their lives were not safe one day at a time. One wonders if Peter himself did not have this in mind when, in his second epistle (1:13, 14) he says: "And I think it right, so long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance: knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle *cometh swiftly*, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me." Did not the apostle himself feel that it was but a matter of a short time, indeed, at any time, that he might be called upon to die? Therefore seeing he could die at "any moment," there was evidently nothing in the way of believing that Jesus could come at any moment. And let us not forget that it is also true that at any moment *after* Peter's death the Lord could have come. Certainly there is *now* no barrier to the Lord's Coming so far as the case of Peter is concerned. However "living" that issue might have been then, it is "dead" now. It is of interest to note that Peter wrote this second epistle, in which he speaks of dying "swiftly," in the same year in which he actually died (67 or 68 A. D.).

In this connection the objection to our Lord's imminent Coming as taken from Paul's vision in which it was declared that he should see Rome and bear witness there, is brought up. This is the argument: "It had been revealed to Paul in a vision" (Acts 23:11) that he should bear witness for Christ in Rome. "And in the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified of me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Again, in Romans 15:24 and 28 Paul refers to his intention to visit Rome, fully expecting that his intention will be carried out. "Now," say those who oppose the imminent Coming of the Lord, "how could Paul expect the Lord to come at any moment, as it is claimed the letters to the Thessalonians teach, when he knew from the vision which the Lord had vouchsafed him that he must bear witness for Christ in Rome?"

The answer to this objection must take cognizance of the chronology of Paul's life, journeys and writings. The epistles to the Thessalonians were written (52 A. D.) some five years before the references in Acts and Romans. Nor should we overlook the fact that the reference in Romans was made before Paul received the vision as recorded in Acts 23, and so is not to be considered out of harmony with the views regarding the Coming as expressed in 1 Thessalonians, always provided, of course, that such were according to the divine will (Rom. 15:32) and that the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-17) did not take place before. The date of the epistle of the Romans is probably the spring of 57 A. D. and was written while Paul was at Corinth. It was not until later in that year, while a prisoner at Jerusalem, that he had the vision referred to in Acts 23, with regard to seeing Rome.

Further, there is no evidence that Paul communicated the vision he had received to others. In that event the fact of the vision would not counter-effect any of his teaching as to the imminency of Christ's Coming, such as had been expressed in the Thessalonian epistles. In connection also with Paul's statement that "He was now ready to be offered and the time of his departure was at hand" it should not be overlooked that he might well have made such a statement with the proviso in mind that such an event would take place, unless the Lord came and thus delivered him out of the mouth of the lion. "If the Lord tarry," is a saying that could have been in the heart of the apostle just as many a saint of God to-day who believes in the imminency of the Lord's Coming makes plans for a journey, but always with the thought in his heart, yea, and oftentimes expressed, "If the Lord tarry" and "if God will" (James 4:13-17). However, neither the case of Peter nor Paul affords an obstacle to the imminent coming of our Lord in our day, even if they ever did in the times of the apostles themselves. Certain it is that John had a right to believe, even in harmony with impression the words of Jesus left upon the minds of the brethren, that he might live to see the Coming of Christ.

(3) *That the imminent Coming of Christ is justly inferred from Paul's statement in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.*

This is how the passage reads: "For I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the

Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

In order that we may understand these words it is necessary to comprehend Paul's purpose in writing this epistle. The Thessalonian Christians, perhaps above those of any other Christian Church, were intensely interested in the Coming of the Lord. As has been before mentioned each chapter in the epistle ends with a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. The ranks of the Church in Thessalonica were being decimated by death, and those remaining alive were plunged into sorrow because they thought their loved ones who had died would not have any share in the glory of the Coming of Christ. The apostle, therefore, writes this epistle to comfort them on this particular point, and to assure them that when the Lord does come He will not neglect their righteous dead, but will really deal with them before the living, for "the dead in Christ will rise *first*; then we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be caught up together with them in the clouds . . . to be forever with the Lord." It is maintained by those believing in the Premillennial Coming of Christ that a fair interpretation and inference from the use of the words "we" (16, 18) and "you" (13-18) lead us to believe that the Thessalonians had a right to expect that Christ *could* (not that He *would*) come at any time,

even during the lifetime of those then living, otherwise, it is argued, what comfort would there have been to those bereaved Thessalonians to be told that some time, at the last day, in the general resurrection, they would see their loved ones again. What unique and particular comfort would there be in that, for is it not true that such a prospect as that is held out for all?

Jesus and Martha

One is reminded in this connection of the conversation which took place between Jesus and Martha in connection with the raising of Lazarus. Martha said, perhaps petulantly and complainingly, gently reproaching the Master for His seeming negligence, by delaying His coming when news was carried to Him that Lazarus was sick: "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." The reply of Jesus was, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha said, "I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection at the last day" (and, shall we add these words, which we think are understood although not expressed in the sacred text?) "but of what comfort is that to me now?" You see it was *present* comfort that Martha was needing and wanted, and the thought of a meeting that was postponed to some distant future day did not heal her broken heart *now*. It was then that Jesus gave expression to those memorable words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25). It was as though Jesus said, "If I can raise your brother at the last day, cannot I raise him now? Do you believe that?" Martha replied, "Yea, Lord, I believe." And her brother was raised. So it is believed that Paul intended to convey some such present comfort to the Thessalonian Christians by the use of "we" and "you." Do not these

words, grammatically, compel us to put such a construction on them? This being so, we may say that the Thessalonians might reasonably expect from these comforting words of Paul that some of them then living might witness the Coming of Christ.

Of course, we are aware that we have a somewhat although not exactly similar "we" in 1 Corinthians 15:51: "We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed," and perhaps it is true that a proper interpretation of these words might be made to refer to those Christians who would be living at the time of Christ's Coming whenever that might be. Nevertheless we believe that the purpose of the writing of the Thessalonian epistle and the immediate context justifies us in making a more personal and imminent application to the "we" and "you" as found there which we cannot make in 1 Corinthians 15. It would be difficult to see how there could be any comfort to these bereaved Thessalonians to tell them that awful sorrows, worse trials, even "The Great Tribulation" lay before them before they would see their loved ones.

(4) *The constant and repeated exhortations of our Lord to His people to be constantly on the "watch" and "ready" for His Coming most certainly lead us to believe that it was an event that might take place at any moment.*

It would be folly, it seems to us, to exhort to such watchfulness if certain great and recognizable events must of necessity take place before the Coming of the Lord, such as "the Great Tribulation," and the "Millennium" or "Thousand Years' Reign."

Let us note some of these exhortations: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when

he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching. . . . And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not. . . . But and if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming . . . the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware and will cut him in sunder and will appoint him his portion with the unbeliever. And that servant which knew his lord's will and did it not neither prepared himself for it, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke 12:35-47).

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were . . . and . . . as the days that were before the flood . . . so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. . . . Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But this know, that if the good man of the house had known in what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not aware of" (Matt. 24:24-50). "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh" (25:13).

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21: 34-36).

It cannot be overlooked, in the quotations just made,—and there are many more such—that our Lord commends those who are on the *constant lookout* and *always watching* for His coming, and that He condemns that “unfaithful servant” who is always claiming that the Lord “delayeth his coming,” and therefore does not order his life in the light of the imminency of that Coming. This is certainly so or words have no meaning.

Further, a closer study of the meaning of the words of these exhortations enforce the claim to an imminent watching. Those servants are to be “on the lookout for their lord till he return from the wedding feast,” that is to say their attitude is to be just the opposite of those “virgins” who “all slumbered and slept,” and that “unfaithful servant” who was continually saying in his heart that his lord “delayeth” his return. Their “lamps” must be “trimmed and burning” and not “going out.” Their “loins” must be “girt about” indicating readiness for immediate departure. They must “watch” and “look” (*gregoreo*), that is be attentive, alert, awake, circumspect, vigilant—the opposite of “asleep” (1 Thess. 5:10; Matt. 25:13). They must be “ready” (*hetoimazo*), an attitude which denotes the very opposite of “not to be expecting,” “not keeping awake” and indicates “readiness with promptness of mind” (so Matt.

24:44; Luke 12:47, 48). It is the opposite of "to linger," to "while away the time," and of "tarrying" (*kronizo*, Matt. 24:48; Luke 12:45; Heb. 10:37; Matt. 25:5; Luke 1:21). "Ready" is the opposite of "not thinking of," "not expecting" (*prosdokao*, Matt. 24:50). So we are to be "watchful," "on the alert," "wakeful" (as Matt. 24:13, 42, 43:—"keep awake therefore," and, immediately, there follows the parable of the Ten Virgins; so 25:43 says, "he would have kept awake"). In Mark 13:33-37 the word "watch" occurs three times in four verses.

(5) *Moreover, we find similar exhortations to watchfulness in the Epistles.*

The Thessalonian Christians are commended because they not only "turned from idols to serve the living and true God," but also because it was characteristic of them that they did "wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Epistle 1:10).

Paul, in writing to Titus, declares what he understands by the Gospel, and in referring particularly to its obligations, says: "For the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13). Does it not seem from these words of Paul that it is as much a part of the Gospel to look for the Coming of Christ as it is to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts"? Without question it is so.

"For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait (look) for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" is the word of the great apostle in writing to the Philippians (3:20).

The idea in this verse (derived from the Greek words *pros* and *apekdexomai*) suggest "attention," "tense watchfulness," "waiting and looking for with eagerness." How could a body of Christians maintain such an attitude if they did not believe in the possibility of that event, for which they were earnestly looking, taking place at any time? It is unreasonable to suppose it.

With what eagerness the people waited for the return of the high priest from his ministrations in the Most Holy Place in order that they might be assured that their offering had been accepted! Do we not recall how feverishly and nervously anxious they were when Zacharias stayed in the Holy Place much longer than they expected (Luke 1:21, "And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marvelled at his tarrying in the temple")? It is just this idea that the writer to the Hebrews has in mind when he says "So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation" (9:28). Just that same anxious, eager frame of mind should characterize the believer in looking for his Great High Priest to come forth from the presence of God where He went to present the blood of the atonement as characterized those men and women of the Old Testament days as they awaited the outcoming of their high priest to assure them that God had accepted their offering and pardoned their sins.

Says Peter, in his second epistle (3:11, 12), "Seeing that these things are to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring (hastening) the coming of the day of God." The Greek words here which describe the attitude of the true Christian in relation

to the Coming of the Lord (*prosdokao*) mean to ponder, think upon, beware of, to look for with intense anticipation; it is (*speudo*) to impel oneself onto, to give diligence to, to press oneself forward into (Acts 20:16). When, as in Luke 2:15, 16, it is coupled with another verb, it is to be read as an adverb, *e. g.*, "hastily," "quickly" (Luke 19:5, 6; Acts 28:18); it means to vehemently desire, most earnestly look for a thing to happen.

Had we time and space more words could be examined which describe the nature of the believer's attitude toward the Coming of the Lord Jesus, and it would be seen that they all contain the idea of expecting that event as something imminent.

Says Dr. A. Maclaren, "Paul's Christianity gathered around two facts and two moments—one in the past, that Christ has come; one in the future, Christ will come.

"*For memory*, the Coming by the Cradle and the Cross. *For hope*, the Coming on His Throne in glory. And between these two moments, like the solid piers of a suspension bridge, the frail structure of the present hangs swinging! . . . We shall not understand Scripture unless we seek to make as prominent in our thoughts, as on its pages, that Second Coming. . . . *It* colours all the New Testament views of life. *It* is used as a magnet to draw men to Jesus Christ by a salutary dread. *It* is used as a motive for every duty."

The Meaning of "Imminent"

There has been a good deal of misunderstanding with regard to what is meant by the expression, "the imminence of His Coming." The word "imminent" does not convey the idea that the Second Coming of Christ

IS ACTUALLY close at hand, nor that it is absolutely sure that they will be fulfilled within the life of this generation or century. Never since Christ and His Apostles taught the Second Coming has the Church at any time said that Christ *WOULD* come during the lifetime of any one generation; it has held that He *COULD* and *MIGHT* be seen in the glory of His Coming at any time. Some one has used the illustration of the "balancing rock" to illumine the meaning of the word. "It is as if a rock were delicately poised; it might remain standing a thousand years, or it might fall within a few hours." So is it with the Coming of Christ. It is better to say it is "imminent" than "impending," for the latter word implies a remote, and somewhat excludes a near, future. So we understand the New Testament to teach that the coming of Christ is an event not that *will* occur at once or even soon—although the Saviour did give certain signs indicative of its nearness—but that it *may* occur at any moment.

"Speedily," "Quickly," "At Hand"

Great care should be exercised in computing time as used by God in the Scriptures. Heaven's time may not be accurately gauged always by earthly almanacs. A famous statesman, some time ago, told some men who had come to him with alarming forebodings of foreign invasion, that they needed to "procure larger maps." One has well said, "There are no mile-posts among the stars. Light and space quite sweep away our little measurements." The story of our planets tells us that. So with regard to the study of prophecy and prophetic times and periods—we need to understand that larger scale on which divine events are taking place.

Even when speaking of time in human terms such words as "speedily" and "shortly" may have a difference of meaning as to length of time. For example, a man may come quickly from next door and will occupy but a few moments in coming. The man who comes quickly from the next city will take a longer time in coming, while the man who comes from some distant country, even though he come quickly, will surely take a much longer time on the journey. Then again, one may come quickly and yet the length of time will be dependent upon the things, be they few or many, he has to do on the journey. Yet in each instance each man may be coming "quickly" and as "speedily" as possible—the man from the far country just as "quickly" as the man from next door. The Church of Christ does not know how many things her Lord has to do while on the journey, how many events have to be fulfilled, nor how many engagements kept while en route, therefore she will be ever on the watch-tower looking for the coming of her Lord. She will not grow weary nor fall "asleep" while waiting, as did the "Virgins," nor accuse her Lord of "delay" as did the "unfaithful servant."

A Biblical illustration of the divine method of computing time is seen in the case of the high priest of the Levitical economy as compared with the Great High Priest of the Christian faith, even Jesus Christ. The service of the earthly tabernacle was a type of the heavenly we are told. Jesus Christ did, redemptively, in the heavenly sanctuary, exactly what the Aaronic high priest did in connection with the redemptive ritual in the Tabernacle and Temple. The blood of the offering was taken by the high priest into the Most Holy Place and there presented by him before Jehovah. How

long the high priest stayed in the Most Holy Place we do not know, but, evidently, not very long, for the people stood without awaiting his coming (Luke 1:21). Certain it is that he never sat down while in there. There was no provision for sitting down. The priests ministered "standing" (Heb. 10:11), not sitting. Yet Christ, in His redemptive work, after He had presented the blood of atonement "sat down" at the right hand of God, "waiting," "expecting" until His enemies become His footstool. That "waiting" has lasted almost two thousand years. You can see that although Christ actually fulfilled, to the very letter and in its completeness, the typical high priesthood of the Old Testament, yet He "sat down," "waited," in the presence of God. And yet the Scripture does not even intimate that there is the slightest inconsistency between the type and anti-type. Of course there is not when we remind ourselves that heaven's method of computing time and ours may be and are altogether different.

"A Little While"—"Delay"

But, to carry this idea a little further, a close study of the New Testament will reveal the fact that what even the New Testament calls "short," the Old Testament may refer to as "delay." For example, in Hebrews 10:37, we have the words, "For yet a very little while, he that cometh shall come and shall not tarry." Yet the Old Testament passage from which this verse is taken (Hab. 2:3, f.) speaks of *delay*: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; yet if it tarry, wait thou for it; it will not be too late." Surely delay is here inferred, so we are told to wait for the fulfillment of the vision. Indeed delay may extend to the last moment, even to the

point which seems that the word has been broken; but the vision will come to pass; the word will not be broken; if it tarry wait for it; it will surely come.

A minister once received a call to a church. He prayed over the matter and was led to believe it to be the will of God to accept it. Yet the house in which he was then living was under lease for three years, and but one year had expired. He could not afford to pay rent in two places. But through prayer God gave him the assurance that his house would be rented and that some one would release him of the obligation. This conviction he communicated to his family. Weeks, yea three months passed by and still the house was not rented. The minister's little girl came to him and said, "Papa, didn't you say God was going to see that our house was rented? Well, this is moving day and it is not rented yet." The minister replied, "Just have faith, my little daughter, the house is not yet vacant." He then went to his room and plead with God to give his daughter a striking illustration of what it is to trust in God even to the last minute, and to believe that the vision will come even though it seem to tarry. The furniture was all taken out of the house; the van stood outside ready to move away. Again the daughter said to her father, "Papa, how about renting the house?" The father replied, "God will answer prayer in His own good time; we have not yet moved away." Just as the van was beginning to move and the father had the key in the door to lock up the empty house, a messenger boy came with a telegram. It was from a Bible lecturer in a distant city who had heard that the minister was leaving Chicago, requesting him to rent the house immediately for him. The daughter learned a lesson in trust, and, also, that though the

vision tarry at times, yet it will surely come, and we must with faith wait for it. There will come a time when "Delay will be no longer" and "the mystery of God will be finished" (Rev. 10:7), but until that time come we must with patience "wait" for the fulfillment of the vision (Heb. 10:36).

"At Hand"?

So is it with the expression, "*The time is at hand.*" It signifies not necessarily that it is immediately to come to pass, but that it is *the next thing of importance* to come to pass. Dr. Kyle, the noted archæologist, tells us of an instance that occurred in his experience in Palestine which illustrates the phrase "at hand." Before retiring, he made arrangement with his host, a native of Palestine, to have an early breakfast in order that he might take an early boat at Tiberias in order to catch a train for Damascus which left from the northern end of the sea of Galilee. The host promised that an early breakfast would be provided and that his guest might retire and feel perfectly at ease about the matter. Dr. Kyle awakened at the appointed time, dressed and waited for the call to early breakfast. But the call did not come. On making inquiry the host said to the Doctor, "Yes, certainly, breakfast is at hand; right away you have breakfast." From what Dr. Kyle gathered from investigation as about two hours passed before his breakfast came, he learned that what the host meant was not that the breakfast was ready then and there when he said it was "at hand," but that it was the important thing that was occupying his attention at that time, and that it was "the next item of any importance on the program for the day." We think it is fair to say that something

like that is meant when the expression "at hand" is used in connection with the Lord's Coming, *e. g.*, "for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

And so with the word "shortly"—"the things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1). The word "shortly" means "speedily," and intimates that when these things begin to come to pass, so quickly will they transpire that the generation then living and seeing the beginning of these things will see their fulfillment.

Perhaps this is the (or one) meaning of the phrase: "This generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled." Of course there is undoubtedly a reference to the miraculous preservation of the Jewish nation or race, but is there not this truth also, and perhaps more so when you consider the "forward look" in the Olivet discourse, that Jesus referred not to the generation He was then speaking *to*, but the generation He was speaking *about*, that generation that would be living when these things *began* to be fulfilled, so quickly would events transpire once they began that the generation that saw the "fig tree" budding would also see it in full fruitage?

That "Forward Look"

We are being reminded in these days that we need to take a "backward look" and consider the early Christian Church and its experiences. Shall we not rather say that what we need to-day is the "forward look"—that anxious watching for "the next great and important event" in the program of God? And shall we say, further, that in addition to the "forward look," we need the "downward look," such as John had when in Revelation 4 he was caught up and saw a door opened in heaven, through

which he entered and saw what was going to transpire, indeed was actually transpiring as the apostle saw it in vision form, upon the earth, as the carrying out of the purposes of God? And it is not too much to say that this "forward" and "downward" look should be the characteristic note in our preaching to-day. For after all the preaching of the Gospel is not as some one has said "the interpreting of the results of an autopsy over a dead Christ, or proclaiming a coroner's verdict as to the cause of His death," but the proclamation of a living, exalted and glorified Lord, Who once was crucified, dead and buried but now lives triumphantly over sin and death and Who is one day coming again in the glory of the Father and with the holy angels to rule and judge the world. Our duty is to "Tell it out among the nations that the Lord is King." That was the keynote of the apostolic preaching. Study the sermons in the Acts and see for yourself (cf. Acts 2:36; 3:19-23, *e. g.*). "Till he send Jesus"—this was the clarion note of the fervid, earnest, importunate preaching of the apostles. God's message to the world, according to Paul in Acts 17:31 is that "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained and hath given proof to all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." This is the believer's outlook, the Church's attitude, and the world's warning.

The Second Coming of Christ is the crowning objective of all revelation, for God "hath put all things in subjection under his (Christ's) feet, and hath given him to be head over all things; and all things are to be summed up in Christ and his victorious reign" (see 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:21-23; 3:11; 1:11-13).

It was the late Dr. Brown, an ardent postmillennialist,

who, urging preachers to pay more attention to the preaching of the Second Coming of Christ, said: "It may reveal to us our latent unbelief and may rouse in us a new consciousness of the divine meaning of the events through which we are now passing."

"It may be in the evening,
When the work of the day is done,
And you've time to sit in the twilight,
And watch the setting sun,
While the long, bright day dies slowly
O'er the sea,
And the hour grows quiet and holy
With thoughts of Me;
Let the door be on the latch
In your home,
For it may be through the gloaming
I will come.

"It may be when the midnight
Is heavy upon the land,
And the black waves lying humbly
Along the sand;
When the moonless night draws close,
And the lights are out in the house;
When the fires burn low and red,
And the watch is ticking loudly
Beside the bed;
Though you sleep, tired out on your couch
Still your heart must wake and watch
In the dark room,
For it may be that at midnight
I will come.

"It may be at the cockerow,
When the night is dying slowly
In the sky;
And the sea looks calm and holy,

Waiting for the dawn of the golden sun
Which draweth nigh;
In the chill before the dawning
I may come.

“It may be in the morning
When the sun is bright and strong,
And the dew is glittering sharply
Over the little lawn;
With the long day’s work before you,
You rise up with the sun,
And the neighbours come to talk a little
Of all that must be done;
But remember that I may be the next
To come in at the door,
To call you from your busy work
For evermore.

“As you work your heart must watch,
For the door is on the latch
In your room,
And it may be in the morning
I will come.”

(b) *The Postmillennial Position.*

Objections to the doctrine of the “Millennium” (in general), and to “Premillennialism” (in particular) are (1) *That it is a purely “Jewish” Doctrine.*

It is maintained by those who oppose the doctrine of Millennialism, that the whole idea is purely “Jewish,” and was adopted by the Jews while in captivity among the Babylonians and Persians, principally the Persians; that this “Jewish” idea was carried over into the Christian Church by so called “Chiliasts,” that part of the Church having a leaning toward Judaism and Judaistic tendencies.

In general this is about the way they explain the mat-

ter: The Jewish nation always held the idea of their supremacy over the other nations of the earth, and that, some day, the "will of God"—which in the mind of the Jew was equivalent to the reign of Israel—would one day cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. To the Hebrew mind the "Kingdom of God," and "God's will" were equivalent to the world-wide supremacy of Jewish Law, so the idea of the "Kingdom of God" was one that was characterized by supreme nationalism: "God was to be interpreted in terms of Jewish nationalism," that the idea of Jewish nationalistic supremacy was nevertheless kept alive during those days of foreign oppression, belief in the Jewish "Golden Age," was never lost sight of, entirely, the faithful remnant always believing that the departed glory of Israel would be restored, and that, perhaps, after six thousand years of history.

It is the view of the opponents of the doctrine of the Lord's Return that the Jews believed that the world was created in six days, and that the Lord's creative rest came on the seventh day. Inasmuch as "a thousand years is with the Lord as one day, and one day as a thousand years" (2 Pet. 3: 8; Psalms. 90: 4), there would, therefore, be a "Sabbath-keeping," a glorious "Sabbath of God," a "Thousand year" period of cessation from sin and unrest, a "Millennium," a "Golden Age," in which the will of God, and the "Kingdom of God" should be supreme. During this period the Messiah of the Jews would be King and reign over the whole earth, the temple at Jerusalem would be restored and become the central place of worship for all mankind. As one writer puts it: "The Millennium is to be marked by the supremacy of the Jews. Their temple is to become the centre of the worship of the whole race. The throne of

David is to be restored and their Messiah is to sit upon it in regal splendour. This is still the hope of the Jews. They still look for Immanuel to come and sit upon a material throne which will be set up in Jerusalem, and from this throne Messiah will rule over all the earth."

The Matter of "Persian" Influence

To continue: The idea of "A Golden Age," a "Kingdom of God," a "Millennium" the Jews kept alive all through their captivity, they found among Persian folklore, legends and beliefs concerning the evil of the world and the ending of all history in a final catastrophe, a certain amount of material upon which they could develop their doctrine. Indeed the Persian doctrine afforded them great comfort amid their disappointed hopes. Some changes would have to be made to fit in and adapt Persian myths and beliefs with the faith of Judaism, but that could be done. They found that the Persians, too, believed in an "Age to Come," the leader of that "Age" being a striking personality called "Shaoshyant." It was an easy matter therefore to substitute the Jewish idea of a "Golden Age" for the Persian "Age to Come," and the "Messiah" for "Shaoshyant." Downcast Israel had come across Persian legend that seemed to aid them in the development of a belief that still gave them hope for Jewish National supremacy. So they merged the Persian idea of the "Age to Come" with the Jewish "Golden Age" and called it "Kingdom of God" over which they set their Messiah, Jesus, the Christ. Indeed, it is claimed that the confusion said to exist to-day with regard to clearly defining the "Kingdom of Heaven" is attributed to the attempt to merge two irreconcilable ideas—the

“speculative” (Persian), and the “spiritual” (Jewish). Inasmuch, therefore, as the Jewish idea was a “spiritual” one and the Persian legend purely “speculative,” there arose what is true in Millennialism, namely, the spiritual rule of God over the entire earth, and also what is (called) false wit, namely, the speculative aspect of the doctrine which enters into literality and details, such as the general apostasy, the catastrophie and sensational ending of all things with the advent from the skies of the Messiah.

Paul's Pagan Ideas (?)

The opponents of this doctrine further maintain not only that the entire Biblical and Jewish teaching regarding the Millennium received its colouring from Persian legendary and mythological ideas, but that such ideas coloured Paul's writings, and composed “the atmosphere in which he lived,” that “he knew no better,” and that he was “the child of this environment.” We are told that Paul used the name “Christ” only when dealing with these “speculative” views concerning world affairs, and that “Christ” is, in Paul's writings, about equal to “Shaoshyant” in Persian legend. Indeed they go so far as to say that “Paul was a little mixed up here” when he spoke of “Christ-in-me”—which was the Jesus of personal experience—and the “Christ” in connection with matters eschatological; that he here “confuses Christ with the Spirit,” and that he should have said “The Spirit-in-me” not “Christ-in-me.” So “Paul's two ideas of Christ stand unharmonized until John (A. D. 125) ¹ straightened them out by showing that

¹ Putting John at this late date is indicative of ignorance. His most recent criticism leans toward the lifetime of the apostle.

Christ began His reign at the Cross." So the Second Coming is, by John, "taken out of the realm of the apocalyptic and put into that of Christian experience, that of the spiritual and religious." It follows, therefore, that the Coming of Jesus Christ is a spiritual and not a personal, bodily Coming. Whenever, therefore, Paul uses the term "Christ" in connection with future things he is writing under the influence of his pagan thinking. It is only the "Christ-in-me" idea that is essentially spiritual and Christian.

Now, it is claimed, that with this background, that element in the early Christian Church which manifested a leaning toward Judaism adopted these Jewish-Persian theories. They saw that Jesus had not come, as they seemed to think He had so promised to do, and as the apostles had (apparently) so taught; the reign of righteousness with King Jesus at the head had not materialized. The world seemed to be getting worse. What should be done? Why not fall back upon "The Kingdom of God" ideas that the Jews believed and taught as the expression of their faith in the Old Testament prophets? Was it not according to the revelation of God that the world was destined to grow worse and that nothing but a world catastrophe could bring about a new order of things and usher in the "Kingdom of God"?

Thus, it is claimed, arose the doctrine of what is known as "Millennialism," "The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus," and, specifically, "Premillennialism." Of course it is admitted that the Jewish and Christian conceptions of the Millennium differ in some respects; for example, while the Jews hold that their Messiah has not yet come, and that when He does come He will be recognized and received by His chosen people; that He will, there and

then, set up His reign upon the earth, sitting upon the throne of David; whereas Christians have all along maintained that the Messiah has already come, that the Jews rejected Him with the result that the Messianic reign was postponed until the Messiah shall again come in power and glory to reign. *Postmillennialists*, however, maintain that Christ is now on the throne and that He now is reigning in the world, only in a spiritual sense, through the spiritual agencies and forces of the Church, and not in any material sense such as *pre-millennialists* believe.

The Answer to Charge of "Jewish" Influence

What shall be our answer to these statements? Are they true or false?

In the first place, the burden of proof rests upon the one making such a charge. So far there is no convincing proof that the Jews borrowed their apocalyptic idea regarding the "Kingdom of God" and the "Golden Age" from either the Persians or Babylonians. The prophecy of Isaiah is replete with teaching which describes such a period as "The Golden Age." So with regard to prophets contemporary with Isaiah. But Isaiah wrote a century or more before the Jews came under the sway of the Persian Empire.

Why should men be so anxious to seek to attribute the doctrines of the Bible to other sources rather than to revelation from God? Why may it not be that the Persians borrowed their ideas of doctrine (particularly that pertaining to the eschatological and apocryphal) from the Jews to whom had been "committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2)? Those "wise men from the East" (Matt. 2) who had seen Christ's star and "had come to

worship him" had doubtless derived their knowledge of such an astronomical event from the reference to it in Numbers 22.

But, further, and in the second place, supposing the whole idea of the "Millennium" is Jewish in its origin, should that make it untrue or unworthy of acceptance by Christians? Are "Jewish" sources false because they emanate from that race? If so, then many of the truths the Christian counts most precious must be discarded as unworthy of belief and acceptance, for almost everything in our Christian religion has, in some way or other, remote or near, sprung from the Jew and his religion. Let us cite some instances:

Take *the Bible*: Is it not Jewish? Did it not spring from sources that were Jewish—referring, of course, to the part played by human authorship in the Scriptures? So far as we know, were not all the authors, with an exception or two, Jewish? Was not the sacred volume produced on Jewish soil? Is not the Old Testament exclusively Jewish? Were we to eliminate from the New Testament every quotation from, allusion and reference to the Old Testament, would not what is left be a small portion comparatively? The "Fulfillments" in the New Testament illustrate well indeed the dependence of the New upon the Old. Shall we discard our Bible, therefore, because it is from "Jewish" sources?

Consider our Christian Religion: Did it not have its origin in that which is Jewish? Did not Jesus Himself say, "Salvation is of (that means, out of, originated with) the Jews" (John 4:22)? Was not Jesus Himself a Jew? . . . "Israelites . . . whose is the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh" (Rom. 9:1-5). From what other source would you expect the things pertaining to our salvation and future hope to come from, saving that which is Jewish? Was it not to them that the "oracles of God were committed" (Rom. 3:2)? Would you expect the glorious hopes of our Christian religion to spring from pagan sources—from the Romans, the Greeks, the Barbarians? Would we not rightly suspicion a religious hope that sprung from such channels?

Consider the Christian Church: Whom did Christ choose as the men to found it (Matt. 16:16-18)? Were they not Jews? Was not the first Christian Church composed almost entirely, perhaps one might say almost exclusively of Jews (Acts 1 and 2)? Was not the Church "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20)?

Consider the atoning death of Jesus Christ: Can you separate it from elements that are Jewish? Was not "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," the "Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root and offspring of David" (Rev. 4:5; cf. John 1:29)? Did not Jesus Himself liken His death to a Jewish event ("For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," John 3:14, 15)? Does not Paul say that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7)? Is not the idea of the "passover" strictly Jewish? Could one at all understand the sacrificial death of Christ aside from the Jewish ritual and sacrificial economy? Shall we then cast aside the doctrine of the death of Christ because it has a "Jewish colouring"? True Christians would die first, before they would be guilty of such sacrilege.

Consider "The Lord's Supper": Are we not taken

back, every time we commemorate this blessed sacrament, to the Jewish paschal meal? Is it not connected with the idea of the Jewish passover? Shall we then cast aside the Lord's Supper because it is related in a most intimate way with that which is "Jewish"? We shall hesitate a long time before we do any such thing.

Consider the descriptions of heaven and the final abode of the righteous: The most wonderful descriptions of our future eternal home are described in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. But a careful reading reveals the fact that those descriptions have a most outstanding "Jewish" colouring. The foundations are of "the twelve apostles of the Lamb." It is the "New Jerusalem," the "Holy City." Its sacred number is "twelve," the number of the tribes of the Children of Israel. The song is of "Moses and the Lamb." Shall we cast aside all our visions of the glories of heaven because they are in some way connected with that which is Jewish? Never.

Consider God's future plans for the redeemed: God's plans and purposes, particularly those which have to do with the future, are most intimately connected with the Jew and that which is Jewish. A close study of the Bible most clearly reveals this incontrovertible fact. Indeed the student will soon be brought to see that the fullness of blessing cannot be brought on the Gentile world until God's purposes with regard to the Jewish nation are fulfilled. The eleventh of Romans is impossible of understanding in any other light, as are many other Scriptures. In His prophetic discourses, delivered on Olivet, and recorded in Matthew 24 and 25, Mark 13 and Luke 21, Jesus associates many of the events connected with His return with a strictly Jewish setting. The Church of Christ cannot come to its full fruition inde-

pendent of certain "Jewish" happenings. There can be no intelligent study of eschatology which would discard that which is "Jewish." The future purposes of God for His redeemed people are so closely associated and identified with the fortunes of Israel that it is impossible to consider the Jewish and Christian element altogether apart and absolutely independent of each other. The very idea is absurd. But not any more so than that which would call upon us to give up an interpretation of the Second Coming of Christ simply because it has some connection with that which is "Jewish."

The Jew—the Standing Miracle of Prophecy

The very preservation of the Jewish race is a proof that much that is "Jewish" will relate itself to events which will close our age: "This generation (Jewish race, so meant in this connection) shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled." The national identity of the Jew has been preserved as has that of no other nation, and that in spite of all that the nations of the world have done to annihilate the Jew. Every indication at the present is that the "nationalization" of the Jew is to be a real fact in spite of all the protest against it. Shall we not say that it is now virtually an accomplished fact? Have not the United States, Great Britain, Japan and France and Italy guaranteed it? It is puerile, in view of these facts, to speak of premillennialism as "an attempt at the renationalization of the Jews." That will be accomplished irrespective of any theory of the Second Coming. When it is said of Christ's death, that it "broke down the middle wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile," it has reference to spiritual matters, those things which pertain to a man's relation to God

so far as spiritual privileges are concerned; it has nothing to do with the disbanding forever of the "nationalization" of the Jew. Let us rightly interpret Scripture.

Even should there be again the restoration of the sacrificial economy of the Mosaic system of the Old Testament at the temple restored in Jerusalem—as some expositors say is the teaching of Ezekiel, although others do not insist on it—they may be offered as "a memorial"—looking back to the finished work of Christ, just as in the Old Testament days they looked forward to the work of Christ in anticipation, faith and hope. Nor is it necessary that there should be a cessation of the preaching of the Gospel contemporaneously with the offering of the sacrifices and the temple worship. Did not the Jewish ritual in the temple and the worship of the early Christian continue together for many years after Christ's death and resurrection? Did not many of the Jews for many years after their acceptance of Jesus Christ still maintain a certain loyalty to the temple as a place of worship? So Acts, chapters 15 and 21 assert.

But, further, we should not forget that all revealed truth concerning the Coming of the Lord is not from purely Jewish sources. Paul is the author, humanly speaking, of a great deal of it, and he claims to have received much of his revelation from God directly. Did not the Jews accuse Paul of being an apostate because what he taught seemed to be contrary to Jewish belief? Was he not stoutly opposed by the Jews in many places because he was accused of teaching things contrary to the belief of the Jews?

If, because a thing is Jewish in its origin, it is to be looked on with suspicion and discarded then much of what Jesus and the Apostles taught would have to be cast

aside, and that would involve a great part of the New Testament and exceeding much of what we know as Christianity. But Jesus rejected what was Jewish when it was false, as the Sermon on the Mount well illustrates. We should not overlook the fact that our blessed Lord has been charged with the same thing in connection with His teaching—that He simply quoted from Jewish tradition and voiced the popular opinion of His times, that He “was a man of his hour,” and simply voiced the current opinions extant among the Jews at that time. So you see the same charge has been laid against our Lord as is now laid against those who hold the pre-millennial doctrine. Were we to reject the Millennium because it savours of Judaism, then, on the same basis, so it seems to us, one would have to reject the incarnation, much of the life of Jesus, His death, ascension, Pentecost, for all are coloured by some Jewish cast of thought. This does not seem to be a fair way to interpret the Scriptures.

(2) *That the Millennium, the Reign of a Thousand Years, is mentioned but once in the Bible, and that in a highly symbolic and figurative book—“The Revelation.”*

The passage to which reference is here made is that found in Revelation 20:1-2, and reads as follows:

“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little while.

“And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them,

and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

“And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth.”

The postmillennialists say of this verse, “This is the seat of the (Pre) doctrine.” “The whole theory rests upon this one passage.” “There is only one passage in the New Testament which definitely sets forth the hope of a return of Christ in bodily form to reign a thousand years upon the earth, this period to be followed by a Satanic outburst. The idea of a Millennium has no place in any writer save the author of the Revelation.”¹

It is admitted, then, that there is actually one passage in the Bible that unmistakably points to the bodily return of our Lord to the earth to reign a thousand years, in other words that teaches a “Millennium.” Postmillennialists themselves admit this. And is it not remarkable that in this connection the author above quoted states

¹ The author of these words, A. J. Moore, has written a series of pamphlets against premillennialism for the Methodist Church of Canada. This author goes on to say, “We do not dodge the issue by spiritualizing the story.”

that the issue is not to be dodged by "spiritualizing" this passage. We are to assume then, from his words, that the passage is to be taken literally, at least the writer and reader of the Revelation intended it to be so taken and did so interpret it.

Six Mentions of "The Millennium."

It should not be overlooked in this connection that while there may be but one passage in which there is "specific mention" of the Millennium by name, yet there are six mentions of it in this one passage:

"And he laid hold on Satan and bound him for *a thousand years*."

"Cast him into the pit until the *thousand years* . . . finished."

"They lived and reigned with Christ a *thousand years*."

"The rest of the dead lived not until the *thousand years* are finished."

"And they shall reign with him a *thousand years*."

"And when the *thousand years* are finished."

Here are six references to the Millennium in seven verses. If, as is generally admitted, the twofold "Verily, verily" indicates "truth and solemnity," what shall we say of a "sixfold mention"? No wonder John is told to "Write . . . for these words are faithful and true." If the words, "Once have I heard, twice hath it been said, that power belongeth unto God," carry unwavering conviction as to the source of power, what shall we say as to the solemn certainty of this sixfold repetition of the fact that Christ shall reign a thousand years upon the earth with His saints? Surely we cannot lightly cast it aside by an attempt to do away with its

reality by a process of "spiritualizing." Even Mr. Moore, an ardent postmillennialist, decries such usage of this passage.

If the argument for the truth of Scriptural statements were dependent for its veracity and acceptance upon the number of times it is mentioned, then, we fear, quite a number of very vital truths would be open to doubtful challenge. For example:

The Holy Spirit is, so far as we recall, only once, specifically, called "God," in the New Testament (Acts 5:4). It is true that there are other passages, and various methods of interpretation from which we may rightly infer that Deity is to be attributed to the third Person of the Trinity, just as there are other passages in the Bible in which the doctrine of the "Millennium" may be rightly inferred although it is not "specifically" called such; yet, speaking from the standpoint of "specific mention" the Holy Spirit is called "God" in but this one passage. Shall we, therefore, refuse to ascribe to the Holy Spirit those attributes of Deity which call upon us to worship Him as God simply because His Godhead is mentioned, specifically, not six times as in the case of the Millennium, but once? The Christian Church would stoutly protest, and rightly so, against any such interpretation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's Person. But why deny the doctrine of the "Millennium" because of its "brief mention"?

The High Priesthood of Jesus Christ is one of the most important doctrines connected with the Person and redemptive work of Christ. And there can be no true appreciation of that doctrine unless the "eternal" aspect of that High Priesthood is understood, for Christ is not a Priest "after Aaron" only, He is also "a priest for ever

after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5: 6-10; 7: 4-28). Now because Melchizedek is mentioned, historically, but once (Gen. 14—the reference in the Psalm 110: 4 being a repetition of the Genesis mention, practically) antecedent to Christ's coming, and because he is very difficult indeed to understand—indeed it is a question if any one really fully understands him (Heb. 5: 6-10), shall we therefore refuse to believe in the "eternal priesthood" of Christ? Certainly not. Any line of argument proposed with that end in view would be considered absurd. What shall we say then about the argument against the "Millennium" because it is mentioned but "once" and is surrounded with mystery? Shall we then cast aside the doctrine of the "thousand years" reign?

But *once* in the Scriptures do we find the words, "*Hear ye him,*" as referring to Christ and the obligation resting upon us to obedience to His word. Shall we then refuse to render the Son of God our just and proper obedience? No; the soul that will not hear Him "shall be cut off" (cf. Acts 3: 22, 23).

But *once* "in the end of the age did he (Christ) appear to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9: 26). Shall we therefore look with indifference upon that event because it happened but *once*?

The Lord's Supper is one of the most important sacraments of the Christian Church; indeed, we could not think of a Christian Church without provision being made for its celebration. Yet there are but *two* specific mentions of it in the New Testament.¹ Shall we refuse

¹ Counting the synoptic references as practically one, which indeed they are; and then the reference to it in 1 Corinthians 11. The allusions in the Acts to "the breaking of bread" may be questioned as to referring to the Lord's Supper seeing there is no mention of wine in connection with it. The reference in John

then to "remember" our Lord Jesus, and His work on the Cross for us, simply because we have but two specific mentions of it in the New Testament? Certainly not.

The day of worship for the Christian is "*The Lord's Day*," the first day of the week. But why should it be so? Surely the first day is not the original Sabbath; that was the "seventh day of the week." Where in the entire New Testament is there even one specific verse that "commands" such a change, and makes such a demand upon us? So far as we now recall there is not one single passage in which this change is "commanded."¹

What kind of faith is this that calls for numerous repetitions before it will believe? Surely not the faith of the New Testament. In the epistle to the Hebrews we find such expressions as, "Again, he saith," and "Again he defineth," and each time such expression is used there seems to be carried with it a rebuke. What God has said *once* should be sufficient for His child. A minister was making a call on one of his parishioners who was dying. After talking with her a while, he opened his Bible to read to her one of the precious promises of the Master. He read from John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in

6 to "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man" refers, we think, to participation in Christ's redemptive work on the Cross.

¹ Mark you, we believe that the change from the seventh to the first day of the week for the day of worship is justified and can be proven and by unquestionable evidence, but we are referring now to exact specific Scriptural commands. The postmillennialist is unwilling to accept the doctrine of a "Millennium" because it is mentioned in but one passage in the New Testament, although it is mentioned six times in that one reference, and yet will fight strenuously for the observance of the first day of the week for the day of worship when there is not one specific "command" to keep the "first day."

no wise cast out.” The minister, in an effort to encourage the dying saint, told her that in the Greek there was a double negative in this verse, and that it read, “I will not, no I will not cast him out, not by any means.” “Isn’t that most comforting,” said the minister, “and lest we should be downhearted and fearful, God repeats the invitation. Now,” said the minister to the dying saint, “do you believe on the ground of this repeated assurance of Christ that He receives you?” “Ah, man,” said the old Scotch saint, “is that all the knowledge that ye have of Him? Had He said it but once I would have believed Him.” The minister felt the rebuke. Why then should we be constantly asking for reiterations and repetitions? Hath He said it *once*? Then that shall be enough for the trusting soul. And when in the one place He hath six times repeated Himself, what more can a mortal man ask?

Take the matter of *Baptism*. Unquestionably this is one of the most important ordinances in the Christian Church. There would be a fierce conflict waging, particularly in certain quarters, should any attempt be made to minimize the rite of Baptism. And rightly so. Yet, is it not strange that so important an ordinance as Baptism was referred to by our Lord but *once*, and but once in that one passage (Matt. 28:19)?¹ Shall we use the

¹The reference in Mark 16:16 is a repetition of the same parting commission as recorded in Matthew 28, and, indeed, as before noted, is found in the last few verses of Mark which are disputed. That is not to say that we do not admit that these verses have a right to their place in Mark, for we certainly do, but in the science of Biblical Hermeneutics doctrines are not to be built upon “disputed” passages. Jesus uses the word “baptize,” and “baptism” when referring to the work of John and to the work of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, but in only one

same argument with regard to Christian Baptism that the postmillennialist offers with regard to the "Millennium"—that because it is mentioned in but one passage of Scripture it is therefore not to be received? Certainly not. Consistency, thou art a jewel!

Or again, consider the doctrine of *The Church*. How little Jesus said about the Church, that is specifically, and by name. In but two verses does He mention it by name (Matt. 16:18 and 18:17). There lies open before me at this moment a small book in which the teachings of Jesus on various subjects are classified and every reference given to the mention of each subject. I find "the kingdom of heaven," and "the kingdom of God" have one hundred and forty-six Scriptural quotations while "The Church" is mentioned, specifically, in but two Scriptural quotations, and in one of the two it is mentioned in connection with the "kingdom of heaven." According to the theory of the postmillennialist Jesus thought more of the "kingdom of heaven" than He did of the Church.

(3) *As an argument against the "Millennium" it is claimed that Jesus said absolutely nothing about it, and that, had it been as important as premillennialists say it is, He would not thus have passed it by in silence.*

"If the doctrine of the 'Millennium' is so important," say the opponents of the doctrine, "why did not Jesus say something about it? In point of fact, He does not even remotely refer to it." We are not so sure that

reference does He mention what we know of as "Christian Baptism," unless, as some would have us believe that the words, "water and Spirit" (John 3:5; cf. Titus 3:5) refer to water baptism and not to the Word of God as the instrument which the Spirit uses in regeneration (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; Eph. 5:26; John 15:3).

Jesus was absolutely silent on the matter. Perhaps it is true that He did not mention the "Millennium" specifically by name, but we think that certain phrases used by Him did refer to the period of time known as the "thousand years."

One wonders if Jesus did not have the "Millennium" period in mind when He referred to the days of "the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, and ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28, cf. 25:31; Luke 22:30; Rev. 3:21; 4:4; 11:16; 20:4). May He not have referred to His "thousand years' reign" when He spoke of "one of the days of the Son of Man"? May not such expressions be descriptive of the "Golden Age," those days when the Son of Man shall reign in glory upon the earth?

Further, we should remember that we do not have a complete record of all that Jesus said and taught. Paul, for instance, refers to an unreported saying of Christ's, at least it is unreported so far as our four Gospel records are concerned, when he said, "For ye remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." So John, in his First Epistle (1:5), says, "And this is the message which we heard from him (Christ), that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Where, in the recorded sayings of Jesus, do we find these words? And with this agree the words of the Gospel of John (20:30; 21:25), "And there are many other signs truly . . . which are not written in this book . . . the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

Nor should we overlook the fact that the teaching min-

istry of Jesus was limited while He was here on the earth because of the incapacity of the disciples to receive it in its fullness. He said to them, "I have many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth . . . and he will show you the things that are to come" (John 16:12, 13). From this passage it is evident that Jesus expected the Holy Spirit to lead the disciples much deeper into future things than He had been able to do. The same Holy Spirit that led Him would lead them. We should be just as ready to believe what the Holy Spirit has caused to be recorded through the inspired writers as though those very words fell from the lips of Jesus Himself. Further, Jesus said many things to the disciples that they evidently forgot. Take the matter of the resurrection, for example (John 2:22; 20:8, 9). The Holy Spirit would "bring to their remembrance whatsoever things Jesus had said to them" (John 14:26).

The Apostle Paul introduces his teachings regarding the Coming of Christ with the words, "And this we say unto you *by the word of the Lord*" (1 Thess. 4:15). What can this expression mean save that he is quoting from what our Lord actually said whether this came to Paul from the lips of the other apostles or was received "by revelation" (Gal. 1:18-2:2). Is not a distinction made between what Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was given utterance to say, and what Jesus is reported to Himself have said, when Paul says, "But to the married I give charge, yet not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband . . . and the husband leave not the wife" (1 Cor. 7:10, 11). Had not Jesus given expression to just these sentiments re-

garding the marital estate (Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18)? So Paul could quote a "Thus saith the Lord."

There are other important doctrines concerning which Jesus said not a word—that is, so far as the Gospel records declare. There is "The Lord's Day" as the day of Christian worship. He said nothing about that; not even remotely does He refer to it. Shall we then refuse to believe in the Lord's Day as the Christian day of worship simply because Jesus said nothing about it? Jesus said not one word about the ministry as we understand that term to-day. Shall we then not believe in an ordained ministry because of the silence of Jesus on the matter?

But is not the Book of Revelation the word of Christ? Was it not actually given by Him? Is it not an unveiling of future things by the Son of Man Himself? Is He not the Speaker throughout? Surely of this there can be no reasonable doubt, for the opening words of the book declare that it is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," that is it is the Revelation given by Him (1:1). Do not its closing words bear witness to the same truth, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel, to testify unto you these things" (22:16)? And, let us not forget it, this is the Book in which we have the sixfold mention of the "Millennium."

(4) *The postmillennialist charges that the premillennialist "dishonours the Gospel, the Ministry, and the Holy Spirit, and is harmful to all that is necessary to stimulate faith, and makes things look as if the Church were fighting a losing cause."*

Of course, this charge is made on the supposition that it is the distinct teaching of the Scriptures that it is the business of the Church to convert the world. The premillennialist demands Scriptural proof for such an asser-

tion, and maintains that the Bible nowhere declares it to be the function of the Church to save the world before Jesus comes. Indeed, he maintains that the Bible, on the contrary, predicts a gross departure from the faith and a cooling of love toward Christ on the part of many; that the Scriptures, properly interpreted according to etymology and context, show that the Church's function during this dispensation is to witness to the world of the finished work of Christ, that when she has performed this task she will be caught up to meet the Lord, and that after that, if it is ever the divine purpose that the whole world should be converted, God has some other agency or body, perhaps the converted Jewish nation, to perform such a world task.

The postmillennialist, however, maintains stoutly that the Scriptures do teach "world-conversion" by the Church, and cites the parting commission of Jesus to the disciples, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (age)" (Matt. 2: 19, 20). It is said that one of the most ardent postmillennialists, in a book he has written on the subject, ventures to rest the whole argument for "world-conversion" during this age by the Church on this one Scripture reference. If this is so it seems to us that the doctrine rests upon a very frail foundation, for rightly interpreted, as we shall see, the reference does not teach "world-conversion."

"World Conversion."

In seeking to understand the parting commission of

our Lord to the disciples, there are some things we should consider :

First, we should not forget that Mark also records the commission.¹ He records it as follows: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16: 15, 16). From this passage we learn that although the Gospel is preached unto the whole creation, not every person will believe and receive it and be saved; that there will be some who will not believe and shall therefore be "condemned." This does not sound like "world-conversion," even according to the parting commission of our Lord.

Second, a consideration of Matthew 28:19, 20 itself does not in our judgment teach that the world is to be saved. Let us recall that in this very gospel of Matthew (10: 5, 6, 23, *e. g.*) Jesus forbade the disciples to preach the Gospel in any other save Jewish cities. "Into any of the cities of the Samaritans, enter ye not." Indeed the ministry of Jesus Himself was confined to the Jews and Palestine. He was "a minister to the circumcision" (Rom. 15: 8), and ministered "unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15: 24). He said to the Syro-Phœnician woman, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto dogs"—thereby indicating that His ministry was unto Jews and not to Gentiles

¹ We are aware that from verse nine of the last chapter to the end is a disputed passage, that is, that two of the leading manuscripts do not contain these verses, also that they vary in other manuscripts. Yet the evidence for their exclusion from the text is not sufficient to warrant the Revisers in omitting them from the text, although they put a footnote indicating the status of the matter.

(15:25). There were rare exceptions to this exclusive ministry, but they were very few.¹

This exclusivism lasted only until the resurrection of Christ. After that Gospel preaching was not to be bricked up by geographical boundaries nor limited by national restrictions; not Palestine, but the world would be its sphere of activity and propagation from henceforth. When, therefore, Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and disciple all the nations," He was laying emphasis on the *extent of the new field* in which the work of evangelization and discipleship should take place, and did not intend to teach that every individual or nation in that field should be saved. Indeed, as we have already noted, Mark's record distinctly states that many will not believe. From the time of His ascension the great Head of the Church would have Gentile as well as Jew, the heathen nations as well as the chosen people be the recipients of the "good news" and the "good tidings" of salvation. That the disciples so understood Jesus is, we think, clearly brought out in the record of the Church's activity in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Jesus' parting words to the apostles there were, "And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (1:8). And with these words agree the closing words of Luke (24:47), "And he said unto them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations beginning from Jerusalem." See also Colossians

¹ It is interesting to note that in the Gospels of *Mark* and *Luke*, written to Gentiles, both of them, no reference is made in the chapters recording the sending out of the disciples, of this Jewish exclusivism.

1:23; Acts 2:5 to see how the parting commission was understood and carried out by the apostles and early Christians.

Further, were it true that the expression "make disciples of all the nations," were equivalent to actually making Christians of either all the nations or every individual among the nations, then the Jew would be excluded, and would not be a subject for "discipleship," for the word "nations" is used in the Scriptures so as to exclude the Jew, and is used when the Gentiles are contradistinguished from the Jews (see Mark 4:15; 10:5; Luke 2:32). Have our postmillennial friends faced that fact? It is serious enough to cause deeper thinking than we imagine has been given this passage. When, however, we recall that the term "all the nations" is descriptive of the field in which the "making of disciples" is to take place—a field no longer limited, as in Matthew 10, to the Jew and the cities of Israel, but is to include all the nations, Gentiles as well as Jews, then the passage becomes clear.

Third, after describing the extent of the field of the Church's operation—"the whole world," "the whole creation," "every creature"—the Master then lays down the method and means by which this "discipling of the nations" is to take place: by the preaching of the "gospel," "believing it," and the witness of that faith and acceptance by "baptism." This, having been done, the new life begotten by faith in Christ must be nourished by the "teaching" of the Word of God, and will result in an obedience to the will of God.

It seems clear to us, therefore, that the parting commission of Christ does not teach "world-salvation," but the "witness" of the facts of the "good tidings" before

the whole world. Nor should it be overlooked in this connection that the disciples had been sent out on a mission which, while limited in its sphere as compared with this world-wide commission, was, nevertheless, similar in design and purpose: they were sent out "to teach and to preach"—a purpose surely that had in mind the making of disciples for the cause of the Christ, else why "preach and teach" at all?—even though such purpose is not specifically stated in so many words as in the parting commission. Yet this mission did not result in the acceptance by all who heard the preaching and teaching, for we know that the disciples were rejected, maligned, hated, and in some instances perhaps imprisoned. So evangelization does not always end in conversion. Indeed, even "discipleship" is not always equivalent to real salvation in the New Testament, as is evident by Simon Magus (Acts 8); also those "disciples" referred to in Acts, chapters 12, 18, 19. So we read in John 6, "that from that time forth many of his disciples went back on him and walked no more with him." Surely these were not truly converted persons, but merely nominal disciples and followers of Christ.

A Difficulty

Perhaps it would be well in this connection to consider the objection raised against the premillennial view of Christ's Coming on the basis of the passage, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. . . . For verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through all the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come" (Matt. 10:23). In seeking to understand this passage which is used as an objection to the Coming Again at some future day of our Lord Jesus, we should

remember that what is printed on a railroad ticket also holds good here: "Not good if detached." This verse must be interpreted in the light of its context. Jesus was a wonderful Teacher. He was a seer of great distances. He saw not only that which was close at hand, but also that which lay centuries ahead. So in connection with this verse: He had the future as well as the present in mind. A careful reading of the chapter makes that very clear. He referred to the treatment the disciples would receive on the present itinerary among the "cities of Israel"; but He foretold also the treatment they would receive at the hands of the Gentiles in that future work: "Yea, and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake and for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles" (Matt. 10:18). In point of fact, history shows that so fierce was the opposition and persecution with which the apostles were met that they did not finish the evangelization of "all the cities of Israel." There is, therefore, a work of evangelization among the chosen people in their own land yet to be done. After the Church has fulfilled her function, and God has chosen a people from among the Gentiles for His name, then He will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down (cf. Acts 15:16).

"This Generation"

Still another illustration of the need of regarding the context in connection with those Scriptures which deal with the Coming Again of Jesus Christ, and which are put forth as contradicting premillennialism, is Matthew 24:34 and Mark 13:30, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished." The word "generation" as here used,

refers not to "a generation of thirty years," in which time all these things should be fulfilled. It could not mean that, for Christ mentions matters in this very chapter which very clearly point to hundreds of years in the future. He clearly states that "this generation shall not pass away till *all these things* be accomplished." Then He details events which we now know have covered many, many centuries. Further, Christ declares that "no man knoweth the day nor the hour" in which these things shall be fulfilled. How could He say that if He had meant that the present generation of thirty years would see their fulfillment? Jesus never employed such foolish reasoning.

The Meaning of "Leaven"

It is claimed by the postmillennialists that the "parable of the leaven" (Matt. 13) teaches the universal spread and acceptance of the Gospel and the conversion of the world. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13:33). "Leaven," it is maintained, represents the Gospel, and "the woman" the Church; the expression "until the whole was leavened" indicates the complete and final victory of the Gospel, and a saved world.

But, we ask, is the word "leaven" ever used in the sense of that which is good in the New Testament? Never once. Nor is it so used in the Old Testament, save in one possible exceptional case, and that is doubtful as to its meaning evil even there. Christ referred to the "leaven" of the Pharisees as being "hypocrisy" and "false teaching" (Matt. 16: 6, 11, 13; Luke 12: 1; Mark 8: 15). Paul speaks of "the leaven of malice and wick-

edness" (1 Cor. 5:6), and calls upon believers to "purge it out" of their lives and assemblies, that they may be an "unleavened lump" (1 Cor. 5:7). Ask any Jewess even to-day who is preparing her home for the keeping of the passover why she is clearing her house of all "leaven," and she will tell you that it is because it is a symbol of rot, decay, evil, sin. What this parable really teaches is that during the days of "Christendom," the time during which the Lord is absent, the Church will, toward the end of the age, become permeated with "hypocrisy" and "false doctrine." And is not that the condition of the Church to-day?

"The Stone cut out of the Mountain"

But, further, it is claimed that "the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands," in Nebuchadnezzar's Image (Dan. 2) is typical of the onward march of the Church and the spiritual forces of Christ winning the world for God.

It might be well to note, in this connection, that the beneficent results accruing from this "stone" are not the result of gradual development within the image, but are caused by a crisis, a catastrophe—it is cut out of the mountain without hands and hurled with terrific force, smiting the image and scattering it. The very moment "the stone" strikes "the image" it "*immediately*" (not gradually by the processes of the Church's onward march throughout the centuries) fills the whole earth. It is a **CRISIS**, not a process.

Again, the "kingdom of the saints of the most high," or "the kingdom of the Son of Man," is not set up on the pedestal of world kingdoms, but on their ruins. This is no indication of a converted world, but a world unfit

to exist when the kingdom of the Son of Man is set up. Nor should we overlook the fact that the stone strikes the image at its point of lowest deterioration—not on head of gold, breast of silver, waist of brass or legs of iron, but on “the toes of iron and clay,” when the kingdoms of this world are at their poorest condition. Nor does this indicate the betterment of the world until it is converted by gradual processes. It betokens the opposite—nothing but a catastrophe introduces the new kingdom. Again, the striking of the image by the stone does not result in its “conversion” but in its “destruction.” Nor should we overlook the important fact that there are to be other kingdoms after this kingdom of the Son of Man and of the saints of the Most High is set up. But, according to the postmillennialist, there will be another kingdom—the Millennial. This is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

Not only is it true that Scripture nowhere reveals to us anything like “world-conversion” in this dispensation through the agency of the Church, but world conditions to-day give the lie to such a theory. It is indeed a poor showing the Church is making if the conversion of the world is her appointed task. It is said that we behold to-day, after 2,000 years of Gospel preaching, two hundred million more heathen in the world than in the first Christian century. At this rate when will the world be converted? Said James Johnson, secretary of the World’s Missionary Conference, “The heathen Mohammedan population is more to-day by two hundred million than it was one hundred years ago, while the converts and their families do not amount to three millions. The increase of the heathen is numerically more than seventy times greater than that of the converts during the century of

Christian missions." Bishop McDowell, after a careful survey of conditions covering many years, expresses his "doubt that India can ever be won by the present scale of missionary operation."

The Meaning of "Better"

And are conditions at home much better? Advance there has been in science, art, and philosophy. Cities are more brilliantly lighted; we travel faster and more luxuriously; we have bridged the Atlantic with our steamers and girdled the globe with our trains. All these and many more "improvements" we enjoy in this wonderful age. Wireless, radio, telegraph and telephone make for greater expedition. It is a much more convenient, prosperous and luxurious age in which to live than the world has perhaps before seen. But is the world better—morally, ethically, spiritually? Is it more like God in its ways of thinking and living? Is it growing more like Christ? Does it honour God's holy Word and Sabbath as it used to do? Does God control in governmental matters? It has been well said, We call this "an age of light"—it is not—three-fourths of the race is in spiritual darkness. We call this "an age of education"—it is not—with one person in every three unable to read or write. We call it "an age of reason"—it is not—but a single spark ignited the whole world in 1914. We call it an "age of widespread beneficence"—it is not—for one-half of the human race is without access to a physician and is rotting with disease. We call it "an age of wealth"—but with war debts mounting up in every nation a recent magazine says that we are rapidly approaching world-wide bankruptcy. We call it "an age of success"—but God calls it failure, evil men and

seducers waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. We call it "an age of science"—yet is it not startling that the quiet studies of men in laboratories, that the thoughtful developments that have taken place in quiet lecture-rooms have now turned to the destruction of civilization?

A modern magazine writer of special note said recently: "Nineteenth century civilization has broken down . . . there is a collapse of human moral energy, a revival of the primitive, barbaric instincts, and the fierce endeavour to have one's little private will by force. The general sense of the purpose of life is lost in the chaos of petty warring impulses. I do not wish to appear to be preaching, but only the imagery of the Apocalypse can do justice to the present state of Europe. It is not a political, but a spiritual, crisis. If the League of Nations is an Utopia, then our spiritual strength is exhausted and civilization will go down in a welter of barbarous slaughter."—Harold.

Dr. Griffith Thomas, in reviewing Snowden's book, says, "Even Snowden, after identifying 'material progress' with the 'Kingdom of God,' admits in the same breath almost that 'our whole material civilization is a monstrous magazine, that uncontrolled human selfishness can blow up in a world explosion that would shake the planet to its centre. We must control it or it will destroy us.'"

Dr. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, London, speaking on "The Superstition of Progress," said, "If the idea were tested more closely it would be seen that physically the race has made no progress for thousands of years, that, mentally, it could not be claimed that we are the equals of the Athenians or superior to the Romans, and though

moral improvement is difficult to gauge, the evidence of the war has seemed to show that we are not more humane or just or less brutal than the ancients."

Consider the suggested and much needed censorship in morals, movies and literature; the decline in moral relations; the alarming spread of sexual diseases; the increase of divorces, suicides and murders, and then let us ask ourselves some serious questions as to the world growing better.

Disturbing Facts

I saw some figures a little while ago that startled me. They declared that there were ten million children in the United States that never go to Sunday School; fourteen million youths that never darken the doors of a church and are altogether without any religious instruction, and that sixty-five per cent. of our population is unchurched, that is, have no religious affiliations. A report from the Inter-Church World Movement some time ago stated that after a careful canvass it was found that only eight out of every thousand children in the State of Massachusetts knew the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and that the figures were more seriously disheartening in New York State.

In view of these things, what is the use of talking about the world being converted before Christ comes. If matters continue as they have been for centuries and are at present then it seems as though Christ will never come. A converted world! Why, after 2,000 years of Church activity and Christian progress what do we see? A converted world? Nay, verily; all history does not show a converted *village*, hamlet, town, city, let alone a converted world—and all this after 2,000 years of Christian

service and Gospel preaching. And shall we say it with bated breath?—*one scarce sees a converted household.* Alas for the “world conversion” theory!

(5) It is said that premillennialism “*cuts the nerve of Foreign Missions.*”

No charge could be more untrue, it seems to us, than this. The history of Missions gives such a charge the lie. It ought not to be difficult to refute so false a statement. Here is the testimony of Dr. Hudson Taylor, the founder of the great China Inland Mission, as to the effect the study of the Second Coming had upon his life in relation to foreign missions: “Very early in my life the subject of our Lord’s near Return was brought before me. I went carefully through all the passages in the Bible; and the result was that it gave me to see that the hope of the Coming of the Lord is the paramount motive given in the New Testament for earnest, holy service here. Some one speaks of it ‘cutting the nerve of missionary effort.’ I wish to bear personal testimony that it has been the greatest personal spur to me in missionary service. . . . There is first the Coming of the Lord *for* His saints, and then His coming *with* them, and we hasten His coming . . . by doing all that in us lies to carry the Gospel everywhere.” Does that sound as though Dr. Hudson Taylor’s premillennialism had hindered his foreign missionary effort? Can the postmillennialist show similar results?

In the *Princeton Review*, some years ago, there was an interesting article by Dr. R. M. Patterson, a postmillennial writer, in which he refers to this very charge made against premillennialism—that it “cuts the nerve of missions.” He says, “One charge that is made against premillennialism is unjust: that it must cut the nerve of

preaching and missionary effort. . . . For ourselves we must confess that among our personal friends who hold this error (premillennialism) are the most spiritually minded Christians and the most earnest and successful of Christian pastors and preachers.”¹

Who was it that first introduced the Gospel to China? Earl Gutzlaff, a premillennialist. Who opened the door of Christian Missions to Japan? John Battleheim, of Hungary, a premillennialist. Who established Missionary Societies in ten German Universities? Professor Delitzsch, the premillennialist. By whom was the world's greatest Missionary hymn—"From Greenland's Icy Mountains," etc.,—written? Was not its author Reginald Heber, a premillennialist? Robert McCheyne, the inspirer of Missions, was a premillennialist. Alexander Duff, who opened the door to Missions in India, was a premillennialist. George Mueller, who sent the Gospel into all lands, was a premillennialist. J. Hudson, the great apostle of the China Inland Mission, was a premillennialist. Dr. Grattan Guinness, of London, who sent over five hundred missionaries to the foreign field, was a premillennialist. John G. Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, was a premillennialist. Adoniram Judson, the heroic missionary to Burmah, was a premillennialist. The Christian Missionary Alliance, founded by the late Dr. A. B. Simpson, and which has such large representation in the foreign field, is strictly premillennial. This is the position of Robert Speer, and of John Willis Baer. It was the position of J. Wilbur Chapman and Dwight L. Moody. It was the position of the Wesleys, Calvin, Luther, Knox. The originator of the phrase, "The world for Christ in this generation," the late Dr. A. T.

¹ See "The Return of the Lord," p. 195 f.

Pierson, who was for years the editor of *The Missionary Review*, was a premillennialist. Time and space forbid to mention other notable names which could easily be added to this list. In the light of these facts a postmillennialist who still continues to say that premillennialism "cuts the nerve of missions" is lying and he ought to be plainly told so. Such a charge is both a libel and a falsehood and no true Christian will engage in either of these sins.¹

(6) *Dr. West's Reasons for Premillennialism.*

Dr. Nathaniel West gives the following reason why premillennialism rather than postmillennialism is the distinct and clear teaching of the Scripture:

Because God the Father is one. His "decree" to the Son locates the kingdom of glory on earth after the dashing to pieces of the nations, by the Son, in the Messianic judgment. "Until" then, the Son sits on the Father's throne, "expecting" (Psa. 2:8, 9; 110:1-3; Heb. 10:13; 1 Cor. 15:25).

Because God the Son is one. See the parable of the tares, and of the nobleman, Matthew 13:40-43. The kingdom comes in glory on earth only *after* the harvest, which is *at* the Second Coming; only *after* the return of the *nobleman* from the far country.

Because God the Holy Ghost is one. The Spirit can only concur. "Yea, saith the Spirit" (Rev. 14:13). The kingdom cannot come until *after* the second great outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the second great Pentecost in Jerusalem, when Israel is converted. This *follows the invasion* of the land by the last antichrist. See Isaiah 59:19, 20, and Romans 11:25-29; 2 Thessalonians

¹ See Silver's book again under this subject. It has many more such interesting facts.

2:8, 9. Compare these with Acts 3:19-21; Zechariah 12:9-14; 13:1; Ezekiel 36:24-28; 37:1-28; Jeremiah 33:19-26. Such is the evolution of the kingdom of God on earth, the Jew being ever the central figure, at each great epoch of development. The prophecies have "germinant accomplishment." They "overflow" and "repeat."

Because the *holy angels* are such. See Gabriel to Daniel, and to Mary (Dan. 12:1-13; Luke 1:32, 33). Compare, also, Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 25:31.

Because *all the prophets* are such. Nowhere in prophecy does the glorious kingdom on earth come before Messiah's appearing in the clouds, and the resurrection (Dan. 7:13, 27; Rev. 1:7; 14:14; 19:11). The passage in Daniel 12:2 does *not*, when correctly rendered, teach the simultaneous resurrection of all deceased mankind, but only the resurrection of the faithful dead, and the concurrent destruction of the last antichristian host, then overwhelmed with shame and everlasting contempt. So all the great Hebrew doctors have understood it, as did the early Christian apologists, and multitudes of the best modern scholars.

Because all *the apostles* were such. See Peter in Acts 3:19-21, Paul in Romans 8:19-23, John in Revelation 20:1-6. The "*times*" of the "*restoring*" follow the "sending back" of Jesus from heaven, in like manner as He went up into heaven, *i. e.*, visibly, personally, in a cloud, Olivet, the locality of the ascension, being the locality of the return (Acts 1:12; Zech. 14:4).

Because *the early Christian Church* was such for three centuries, until corrupted by the union of the Church and State under Constantine, when all the Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel were applied to the

nominally Christianized empire of the fourth century. To dispute this is to trifle with history.

Because the only pre-advent millennialists found in the Bible are (1) *Satan*, who would have Christ seated in His visible kingdom and glory on earth, not only before the second advent, but even before the crucifixion, a subtle temptation the object of which is clear (Matt. 4:8, 9); and (2) *antichrist*, the last mock-messiah of the Jews, entering the field, first of all, by peace, policy, craft, and deceit, then going forth "conquering and to conquer," seeking universal dominion, only, however, to be overthrown by the true Christ at His appearing from "heaven opened" (Rev. 6:2; 19:11-21).

Because, from whatever point, or event, in the line of history, the thousand years are dated, in any case they come *after*, never *before*, the parousia of Christ, let that event be interpreted either literally, spiritually or providentially. Nothing is more clear. If it is a spiritual coming, still the spiritual millennium must *follow* that coming, not precede it. If it is a literal one, the case is the same. And that the parousia of Christ, under which antichrist falls, and Israel is delivered, and the saints are raised, is a literal one, and still future, it is impossible for holy writ to make plainer. Nothing but an allegorizing exegesis can erase the conclusion.

Because postmillennialism is replete with manifest error. As has well been said, it "heathenizes by adopting a Platonizing and Alexandrine exegesis." It confounds the accommodation and application of Scripture with the interpretation of Scripture. But "application," as Delitzsch well says, is not "interpretation." The former is manifold, the latter unitous. In the former Israel is evaporated, in the latter Israel holds his

place as a constant factor in the great epochs of the kingdom of God.

Postmillennialism mixes the different ends and ages. It substitutes death, the destruction of Jerusalem, revivals, Pentecost, providence, for the second advent of Christ in a multitude of passages. It does violence to interpretation by dogmatic presuppositions, and personal inclination. It makes time and history end with the end of this present age. It creates an irreconcilable antagonism between Daniel and John, and between Christ and both, as to the "first resurrection." It makes the "world to come" mean the disembodied state of the soul, after death, in a super-earthly sphere. It identifies the throne of David with the throne of God the Father in heaven. It obliterates the distinction between Israel and the Church. And not to multiply instances, it does in general for Eschatology what it did for Soteriology before the reformation: perverts it, leaving as deep an error in the former, to be eradicated by our own and succeeding times, from the field of evangelical truth, as it left in the latter, to be eradicated by the Reformation. Protestantism is not yet wholly purged from the errors it has inherited from popery. The "leaven" will remain in the "meal" until the Lord comes.

VI

WHY STUDY THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST?

THIS question is often asked: "What is the use of studying this doctrine, anyway; it only makes for controversy, discussion and the separation of Christians? It is purely speculative, and like many other prophetic subjects does not yield any practical good in the daily life. What difference will it make in living?"

This is the opinion of the doctrine of the Lord's Coming that many people entertain. It is a false view of this precious doctrine, for there is no more practical doctrine in the Word of God than this one. As to its being "speculative," well, one may speculate on the doctrine of the Trinity, the Atonement, indeed any other of the great doctrines of the Christian Faith, but that does not make them any the less true or important and vital. True it is that belief in this doctrine sometimes divides even church people, but so does the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ and the vicarious death of Christ. Perhaps, in these instances, division is a most healthful sign, much as schisms for unnecessary reasons are to be deplored.

The very prominence of the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ as set forth in the Scriptures (see pp. 19-29) should be a sufficient reason for the obedient child of God to lead him to study it closely.

Because much of the doctrine has to do with future things and events is no reason for its neglect. How could one study the whole Bible without giving due place

to prophecy? "But," it is claimed, "prophecy has to do with the future and so is hidden from us and cannot be known by us." True, prophecy has to do with the future, but it is not altogether hidden from us, certainly that which is revealed in the Scriptures concerning it is not hidden. True, too, it is that "the secret things belong to the Lord," but let us quote all the verse, and not overlook the words, "but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever." We are told (2 Tim. 3:16) that "*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable." All, not a part of it, but "all Scripture." Why then, in the face of these statements, should we fling back into the face of God the "prophetic" parts of His sacred Word because, forsooth, we maintain they cannot be understood?

One was overheard to say, "Oh, that teaching of the Second Coming is all about what is going to happen in the future, and that is no concern of mine; what I am interested in is my personal salvation, and my life in this world." That is consummate selfishness surely. There is no real Gospel that does not include prophecy and the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is it of no interest to the Christian as to Who and What Christ is to be and do in the ages to come? Is the crowning of King Jesus of no importance? Is the fact that the Father has been pleased to "sum up all things in Christ" of no concern to us? To the unconverted the consideration of prophetic subjects may be a side-stepping of the main, and to them the more important question—their soul's salvation, but surely this cannot be true of the Christian's interest in it. Whatever has to do with the exaltation and glorification of Christ has everything to do with the Christian, for in that exaltation and glorification

the Christian is to share. And still there is a sense in which the Second Coming of Christ is of vital concern even to the unconverted. The Coming of Christ is very vitally related to "all the kindreds of the earth," who shall wail and mourn because of their unprepared state; it is the wicked who will "cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come."

"It was this hope," says Dr. Denny, who, by the way, is not friendly to the premillennial doctrine, "which more than anything else gave its colour to the primitive Christianity, its unworldliness, its moral intensity, its command of the future even in this life. That attitude of expectation is the bloom, as it were, of the Christian's character. Without it there is something lacking; the Christian who does not look upward and outward wants one mark of perfection."

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, than whom there is perhaps no greater living expositor of the Word of God, in speaking of the Second Coming as an incentive to Christian living, says, "How long is patience to have her perfect work? Until the Coming of the Lord (James 5:7). How long am I to serve in the King's will in this age? Trade ye herewith until I come (Luke 19:13). When am I to be crowned? At the appearing of Christ (2 Tim. 4:8). When shall we enjoy the reunion with our departed loved ones? When the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven (1 Thess. 4:13-17). Whatever we think of as the character of Christian service and life in this age, we will find it bounded in the New Testament never by death but always by the Coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ.” He then goes on to show that there will be two classes of people, or perhaps two attitudes manifested by people at the Coming of the Lord: those who will be *ashamed* and those who will have boldness or *confidence* before Him when He appears. So you see the very attitude of man toward Christ is determined very largely by his relation to this great doctrine of the Lord’s Coming.

It is remarkable to note that whenever the Second Coming is mentioned in the New Testament it is always in relation to having an imminent and practical effect upon the life. In almost every instance an exhortation or warning is connected with the teaching of the Coming. If we are constantly looking for His Coming then we will not be doing anything which would bring the blush of shame to our cheeks should He come and find us in the doing of it. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself” (cf. 1 John 3:3; 2:28).

No wonder then that Dr. Morgan asks, “Are these facts not most important as to the bearing of this teaching on life? How will it affect my behaviour? I would suggest the question rather than attempt the answer. How should I conduct my business knowing that even as I make my entry I may be interrupted by the call of my Master? How shall I conduct myself in my social and domestic life, in my recreations and amusements knowing that at any moment He may summon me into His presence? The purifying effect of such considerations are evident. The Christian is to serve his generation, live in his home, conduct his business, engage in his pursuits, indulge in his amusements so as to be in readiness at any time.”

Let me close with the words of the Master Himself in

describing the true and faithful servant of His who does His will: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of Man cometh in an hour when ye think not" (Luke 12:36-40).

"If I were told that Christ would come to-morrow;
That the next sun
Which sinks, should bear us past all fear and sorrow,
Care and pain;
All the fight fought, and all the journey through—
What would I do?

"I do not think that I should shrink or falter,
But just go on
Doing my work, nor change, nor seek to alter
Aught that is gone;
But rise, and move, and love, and smile, and pray,
For one more day.

"And lying down at night for a last sleeping,
Say in that ear
Which hearkens ever, 'Lord, within Thy keeping,
How should I fear?
And when to-morrow brings Thee nearer still,
Do Thou Thy will.'

"I might not sleep, for awe; but peaceful, tender,
My soul would lie
All the night long; and when the morning splendour
Flashed o'er the sky,
I think I could smile, could calmly say,
'It is His Day!'"

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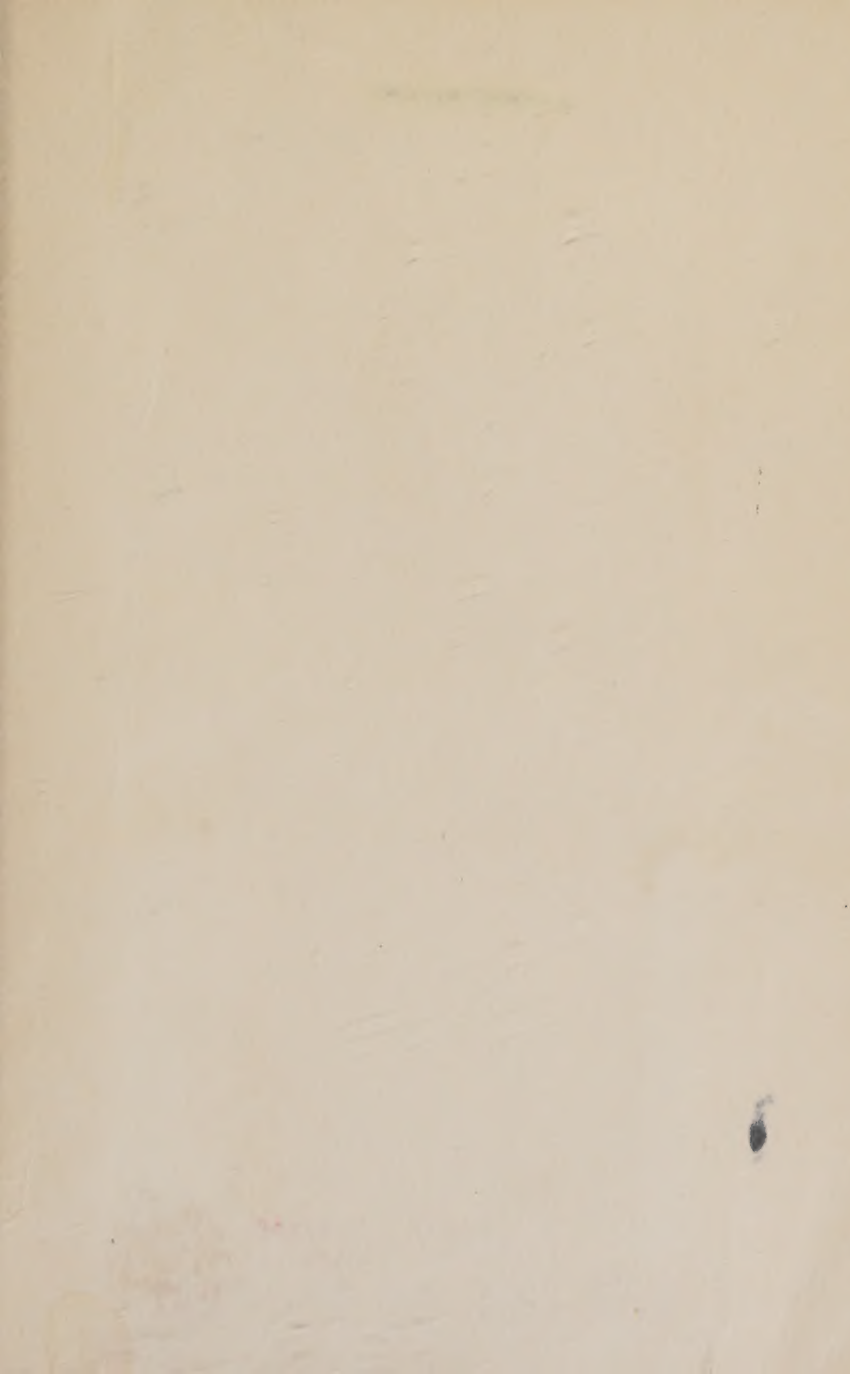
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